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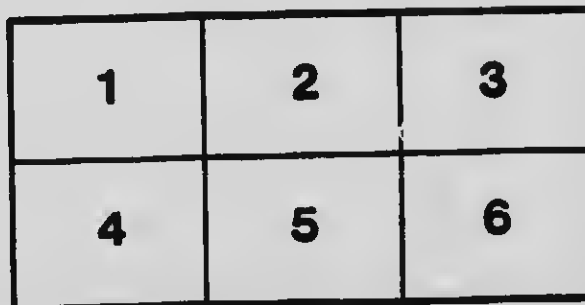
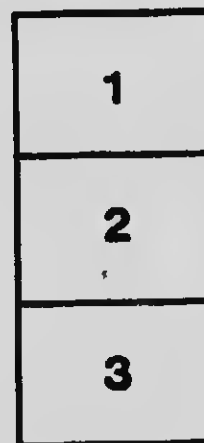
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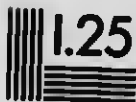
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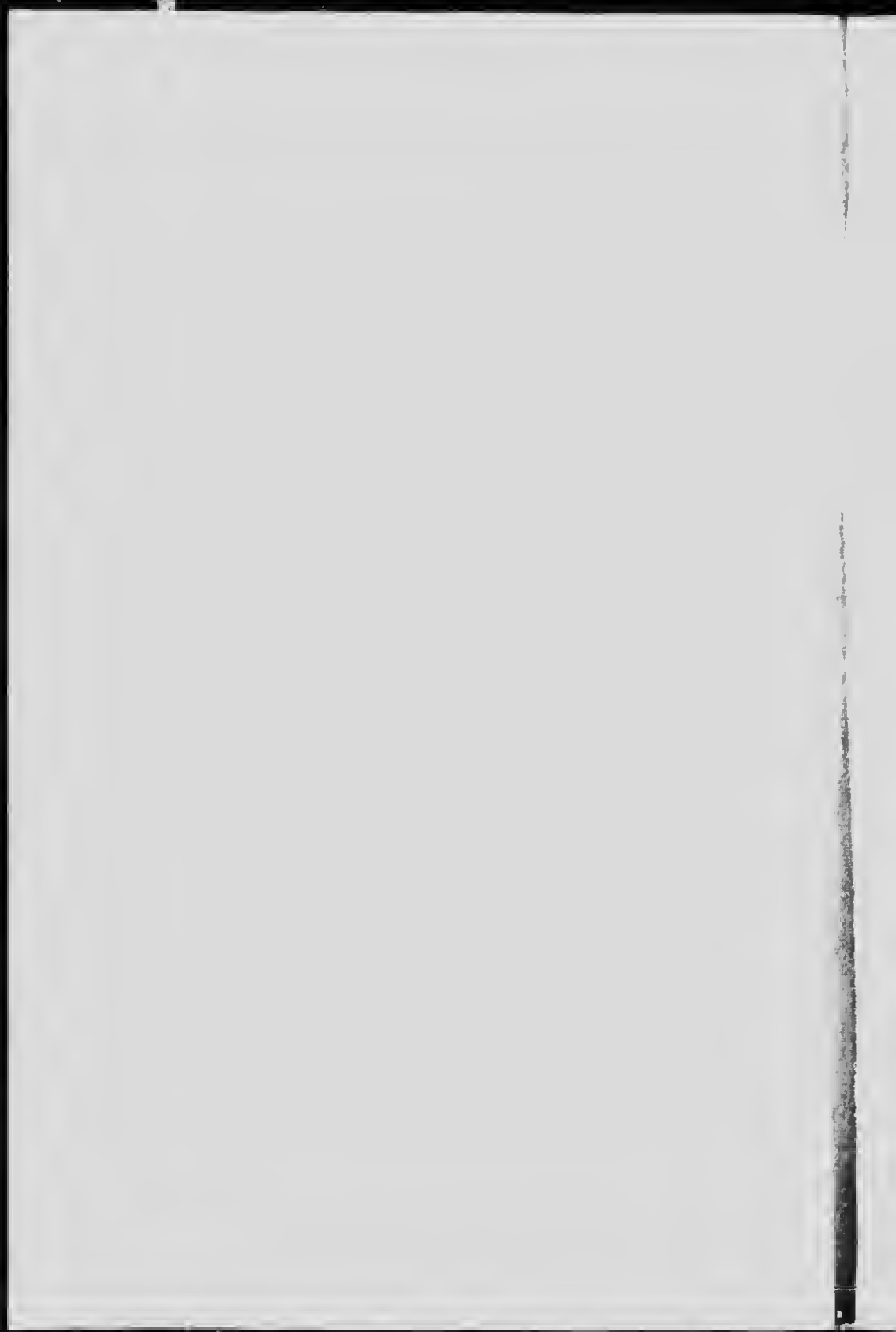
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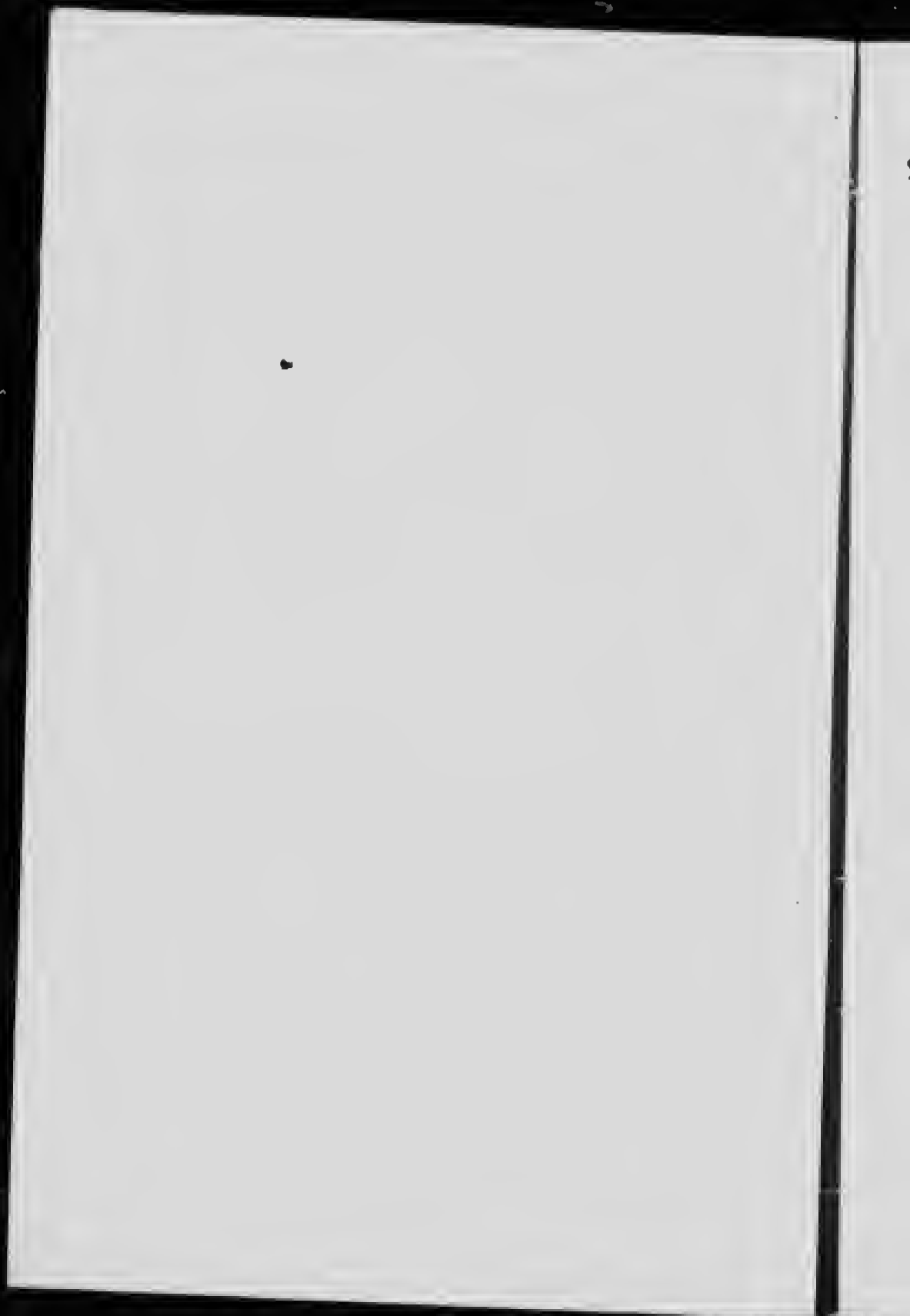
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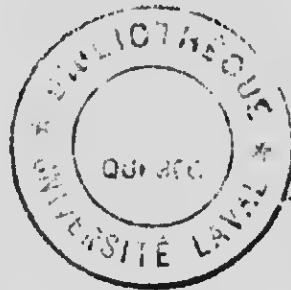
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MANLY WATERS

A STORY OF NEW YORK

BY
ROBERT SHACKLETON

"Many Waters Cannot Quench Love"



TORONTO
WILLIAM BRIGGS
1902

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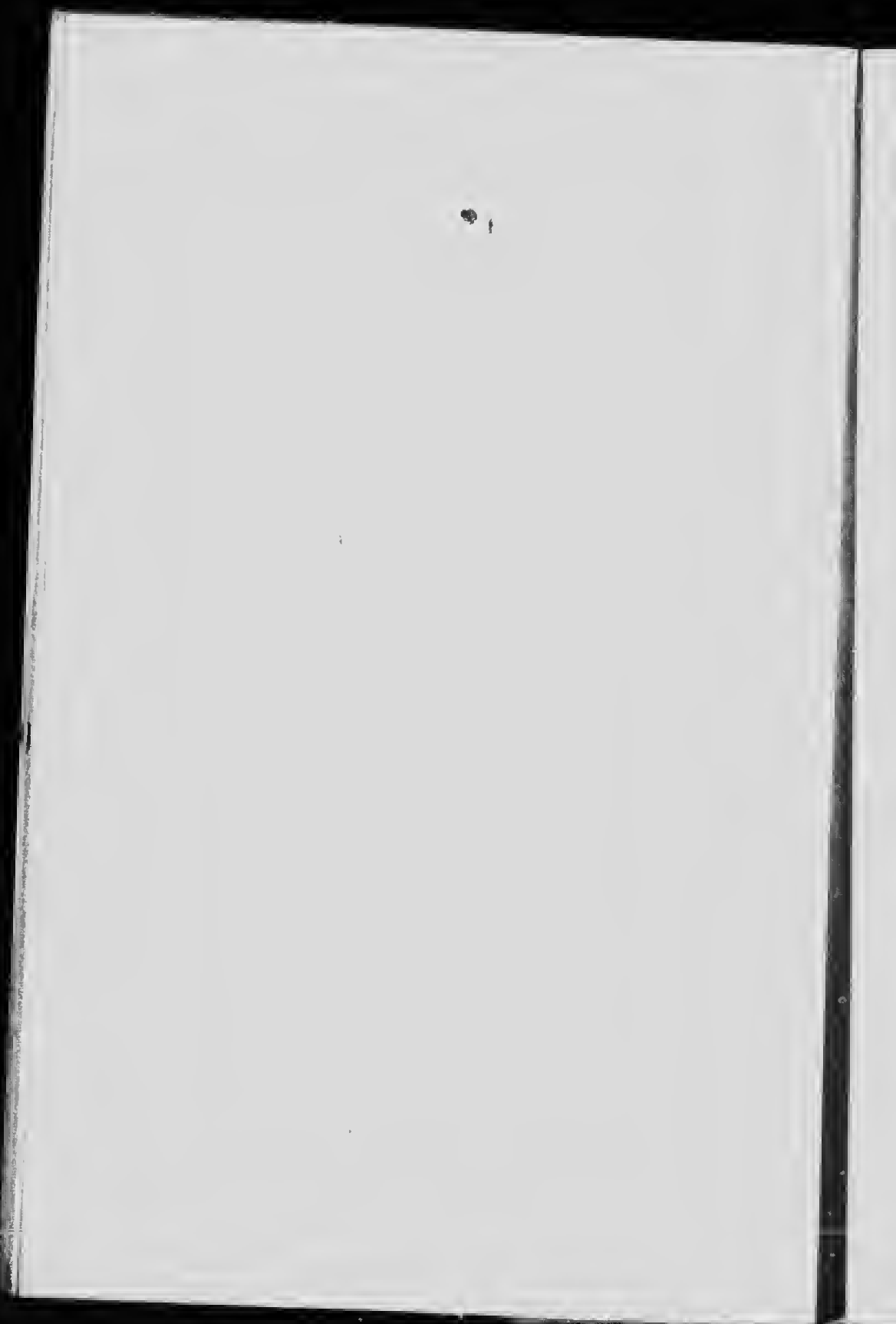
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TO
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CHAPTER I

THE PREDICAMENT OF SHOTTERLY

THE golden sunlight sifted down through a golden mist—a thin mist, lying flat and high—and, below, the air stood strangely clear and still. And up and down the avenue of riches, in that golden sunshine, moved a throng of wealth and fashion.

John Shotterly had received a disquieting letter, and now, as he paused at the summit of Murray Hill and looked down and off at the splendid pageant of prosperity that, in carriages and on foot, thronged Fifth Avenue, the rich brilliancy of the sight could not withdraw his mind from the problem that had suddenly arisen.

He well knew the biting phrases of the letter, and it was almost unconsciously that he again drew it from his pocket and glanced at it.

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"I shall arrive in New York on Tuesday evening, at six o'clock, and shall go direct to the Astoria——"

("It must have been delayed," commented Shotterly to himself; "the mayor's too orderly minded to forget such a thing, but he probably gave it to some one else to mail.")

"If you wish, you may meet me there before I see my daughter——"

("That she is my wife ought to be of more importance than that she is his daughter—ominous, that phrasing, in itself.")

"I have every inclination to be fair toward you, to do you no injustice, to form no decision with undue haste; but I am convinced that you have been extravagant and dissipated, and that your acquaintance are not such as those of my daughter's husband ought to be.

"You well know that I have had occasion to express my dissatisfaction; and therefore it is that I now say, frankly and firmly, that if I find things as bad as they have been represented to me—let me say, however, not by my daughter, who has a large share of the pride of my family, and who prefers to suffer silently—it will be my duty to urge her to a separation.

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Yet, as I said, I am ready to see you first, in fairness to you; and I have not even let her know I am coming."

Shotterly felt irritated by the assumption of fairness in a letter which was so abrupt and harsh. "The fairness of a self-centered man who has fully made up his mind," he muttered to himself. "And I wonder just what Zoe could have written him!"

He started to walk slowly down the avenue, and his face gave no sign of the trouble that had come, and in his bearing there was no trace of its weight.

"And to think this should happen only a month after the collapse of my venture into Wall Street as junior member of our new firm!"

He smiled ruefully; but above all, in his mind, was the feeling that, imminent though disaster was, he must rise superior to it—must thwart it. That fact stood out in stark clearness. He loved Zoe deeply, profoundly; he loved her with intensity. He must prevent her father from carrying out his threat.

What an endless procession of wealth! Wealth everywhere under that golden sun, beneath that golden sky! It was radiating from twinkling wheels, rustling from rich-woven

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silks, self-contained in tweeds and broadcloth. The ripple of soft voices, the soft tinkle of a thread of laughter, the subdued rumble of wheels and the decorous tap of hoofs, the swish of skirts and the shuffle of feet on the sidewalks—the gentle union of all these sounds made a curious chirring chorus.

Shotterly thoughtfully checked his pace as beside him there uprose the front of a great hotel. And there were the windows of the dining-room—well, the mayor would be sitting there in a few hours, and he, John Shotterly, would be sitting opposite, and they would be talking of what a failure life had been and about Zoe's leaving him. And, inconsequently, there came into his mind the words, "Your acquaintance are not such as those of my daughter's husband ought to be."

From the dining-room came the soft gleam of silver and the cool glow of white, and at that moment a tall man, well groomed, slightly stooping, passed between him and the windows. It was City Comptroller Heating. He nodded pleasantly, and so did Shotterly in return. And then, like a flash, there came an idea, and the instant that it came it was acted upon.

"Oh, Mr. Heating, I'm glad to have met you just now! I'm getting together a little party—just half a dozen or so, and quite informal—

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to meet my father-in-law, Mayor Malrose, at dinner—the famous Mayor Malrose, you know—and I thought that you, being a city official yourself——”

“I should be delighted,” said the controller frankly.

Shotterly's air was one of agreeable assurance, of persuasiveness, yet without effrontery. “All right; at seven o'clock; I'm sorry to ask you so late, but I learned of his coming only a little while ago—a delayed letter—and am getting up the dinner-party in a hurry.”

And Shotterly, with a clever haste which he did not allow to become apparent, passed on. His face broke into a curious smile. “Getting up a dinner-party in a hurry! I should say so. And now, the question is, Where shall I get the other five diners?”

He continued down Fifth Avenue. The splendor, the wealth, the golden air were still the same, but his horizon was extended, for the clouds of trouble had begun to lift. His plan, formed and begun on the instant, must now be carried out, and he swiftly bent his mind upon it.

Not far away lived a minister, Doctor Fieldhill, well known as a reformer and public man, and to his home Shotterly hastened. He rang the bell and in a few moments was in the study.

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The minister was just going out, and said so, and this made it the easier for Shotterly to present his case swiftly.

"My father-in-law, Mayor Malrose, will arrive here this afternoon, Doctor Fieldhill, and I'm getting together a little party—just half a dozen, informal and non-political; Comptroller Heating and a few others—to dine with him at the Astoria at seven. You know of Mayor Malrose, of course; the newspapers have had so much about him, and the reviews have had so much by him——"

"Perfectly, perfectly; and with others I have always felt sorry that I have had no chance to meet him."

"He has always regretted the brevity of his visits to New York, and it seemed as if this getting together of just a few men interested in public affairs and municipal improvement——"

"Yes, yes; just so. I shall be pleased. Seven o'clock, did you say? Then I must hurry off now, so as to be back in time. I have to run up to Harlem." And the minister's face—so round and genial when not stern, that the disrespectful compared it to a platter, and said it gave visible evidence of why the clerical gentleman made such a congenial member of a dinner circle—beamed with pleasure, as if the platter had just been polished.

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Exhilarated by his two victories, but not underrating the difficulties still to be surmounted within a swiftly lessening time, Shotterly walked back to Fifth Avenue. There the procession of beauty and wealth and fashion was still going on: the air, the crowds, the street, the buildings, seemed steeped in happiness.

Shotterly stood and watched—watched, with every sense alert for an opportunity. Ha! There comes Mr. Harlans, Vice-President and active head of the Thirtieth National Bank. But this would be no easy victory. As a newspaper man, Shotterly had frequently met the controller and the minister, but the banker he knew only by sight. Still, it was no time for hesitation.

“Mr. Harlans”—and there was the charming ease, the pleasing self-assurance—“I am Mr. John Shotterly. I am a stranger to you, though I know of you very well indeed. My father-in-law, the famous Mayor Malrose, is to dine with a little party, informally gathered together for a hastily planned dinner this evening; and he makes such a specialty of municipal finance that he would be delighted to meet you, a practical financier.”

The banker eyed him keenly. Was this some swindling scheme? But he didn't think it was—and, anyhow, there would be time to leave

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if he should find that Mayor Malrose was really not of the party.

"Why, I should, of course, like very much to meet Mayor Mal——."

"Yes; it would please him, too. Of course, this is very unconventional"—he laughed lightly—"but if you prefer an invitation, like a check, to be accompanied with an identification, the clerk or the manager of the Astoria——"

"No, no, Mr. Shotterly; not at all, not at all." (There was certainly something in Shotterly's manner that justified the remark that Severn, the city editor, had once made: "If Shotterly should ever want to turn confidence man, he'd be a winner.") "No, no; if I could arrange it——"

"Mr. Heating, the City Comptroller, is to be one of the party, and Reverend Doctor Fieldhill another—just half a dozen in all——"

"I shall be really pleased, Mr. Shotterly; I have often thought I should like to meet Mayor Malrose. What hour did you say? Seven? I shall be delighted." And he bowed himself away, having spoken with more of warmth because of having at first felt suspicion.

Shotterly's spirits rose, but he knew that the battle was not yet won. He must secure more. There might, at the last moment, be some failure on the part of one or two of the men.

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As he had feared, a series of disappointments next confronted him. He went into the lobby of the Astoria, but not a man was there of the character and standing that he wanted. His own social circle numbered some clever and delightful people, although his newspaper hours had prevented him from forming many close friendships, but none of his immediate friends was of just the kind for this particular dinner. He wanted the entire party to be composed of men either of wealth or of acknowledged position.

While at the hotel he ordered the dinner. He was on the point of arranging for a private room, but decided that to have the party gather at a table in the general dining-room would be in better taste and more unostentatious. There were to be eight at the dinner, and Shotterly went with nice discrimination over the bill of fare.

He left the hotel and again walked down Fifth Avenue. He met and stopped a lawyer of high standing who had for a time been in the diplomatic service; he halted a physician who had won fame by attending some of the nation's greatest men; he stopped a Congressman, another banker, a merchant who was prominent in the Chamber of Commerce and as a member of civic organizations; but in vain.

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None was rude—Shotterly's manner, so full of self-poise and courtesy, prevented that—but none of them would come. And time was slipping rapidly away.

The throng in the avenue grew more dense, the sidewalks more crowded, the carriages more closely massed. The chirring hum was louder. He reached Madison Square, where the mighty flow of Broadway's traffic sweeps by and the cross-stream of Twenty-third Street pours its thronging rush; and he looked back at the avenue, more golden bright in part now, for the sun was sinking toward a golden setting, and in part cool-shadowed, where gray-black blotted out the gold. Thrilled by it all, Shotterly said to himself, with a New Yorker's pride, that indeed he was a citizen of no mean city.

He went through the porticoed entrance of the Fifth Avenue Hotel and paced along the great wide lobby, looking to either side at the men who sat there on the long seats. But he saw no one to invite to the momentous dinner.

He walked to the desk and examined the register. There were several good names there; but it was only too apparent that the signatures were useless in the absence of the signatories. He walked briskly to the Hoffman House, a few doors away, but there also his luck refused to return. There were two

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men whom he tried to secure—one a State senator, the other a man who was talked of for the Democratic nomination for Governor—but with each of them, on the score of a previous engagement, he failed. He thought that the senator really had an engagement and that the candidate hadn't.

It was now getting dangerously late. Back to the Fifth Avenue he went, and once more along the middle of the spacious lobby, and into the café and the reading-room; then into the lobby again, and as he entered it he saw, coming in through the street door, an alert, strong-faced, good-looking man, whom he at once recognized as Paul Waters. Waters was but a little over thirty, but he had already won fame as an engineer, and was at this time engaged in planning and constructing some of the great works in the Croton watershed to increase the water-supply of New York. Shotterly greeted him, told him of the dinner and the mayor, and in less than two minutes had him engaged.

He breathed more freely. Surely, now, the dinner could not be a failure. Still, he had ordered for eight men—some, after all, might disappoint him—and so he must get at least two more. A dinner set for eight, with perhaps but two to sit down, besides the mayor

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and Shotterly himself, would impress Malrose most unfavorably. He must take no chances. The stake was too great to risk, for the stake was Zoe.

There was little time to find more recruits, for he still had to hurry home and dress. He left the hotel and walked briskly back up Fifth Avenue. On the way he saw no one that he could ask, and he again reached the Astoria. As he entered the lobby his attention was drawn to a man who at that moment was coming in; a man with full eyes, very large and bright; a man with a face which Shotterly decided to be cruel, yet which had somewhat of striking attractiveness; a man of capacity, of force, of success. The face seemed familiar, too. Shotterly asked the clerk who the man was.

“Stuart Ward, the young millionaire from the West.”

“Oh, yes, of course!”

For at once Shotterly remembered that he had seen Ward's face in the newspapers, and he had read descriptions of him. Little was known of the man—quiet, taciturn, uncommunicative, but already gaining a reputation as a skilful and daring operator and investor in stocks. He seldom, however, went personally into Wall Street.

Why not have a real millionaire at the din-

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ner! The idea had fascination. Shotterly was a strong believer in the power of luck, and he felt assured that it had swung back to his side.

"I beg your pardon—Mr. Ward, is it not? I know I am a stranger to you, but my father-in-law, the widely known Mayor Malrose—" and so on, through the now familiar formula.

For a moment Shotterly felt as if Ward were looking at him through a pair of microscopes, but he bore the inspection with perfect calm. He did not know that one of Ward's schemes contemplated the consolidation of certain large interests in the very city of which Malrose was mayor, and that the millionaire was wondering whether there were, in this, some counter-scheme.

"Who are to be of the party?" said Ward.

"Just a very few—Comptroller Heating, Reverend Doctor Fieldhill, Mr. Harlans, the Vice-President of the Thirtieth National, Mr. Waters, the famous engineer——"

Ward's eyes were again bent keenly upon him, and then came the acceptance, promptly, frankly, and with just the proper touch of cordiality.

"Five! A millionaire, a great financier, a city official, an engineer, a famous clergyman. What a story for the Diurnal!" And then Shotterly saddened as he realized that this was

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a tale that he could not tell. And it would have been at more than double space rates, too! And at what length he could have written it up!

Now for the sixth. He went back to the desk. "Is there any famous man here in the lobby? Or any one that ought to be famous?"

The clerk looked carefully around. "No; not just now. Only a moment ago several were here, and within the last half hour there have been a dozen big fellows. Oh, see that young fellow over there by the pillar? That's young Hartford, son of former United States Senator Hartford."

Shotterly glanced again at his watch. There was just time. He stepped across to the pillar and spoke to a young man beside it. But there were two young men there, one sitting on one side and one on the other, and Shotterly did not approach the one that the clerk had pointed out.

"I beg your pardon, but this is Mr. Hartford?"

"Yes," said the young man, looking up, frank-eyed. "Sit down, won't you?"

"Thanks; I'm in a great hurry. I'll tell you all about it later, but the fact is that I've only time to give you an invitation. Will you be one of a small party to dine here this evening with Mayor Malrose?"

"But—I don't understand—I've only just

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got into the city this afternoon. And I'm not staying here at the hotel, but just looked in."

"I should be greatly pleased if you would dine with us; the party will be small——"

"There must be some mistake, Mr.——"

"Shotterly. No; no mistake at all, I assure you. You're Mr. Hartford, aren't you?"

"Yes; but I'm sure there's some mistake."

"No, there's no mistake; will you waive ceremony and be one of us?"

There was always something very charming about Shotterly's smile, and now he smiled even more pleasantly than was his wont, for he was feeling elated over his success, and he liked the young fellow with whom he was speaking. "No ceremony—and, pardon me, I'll have to hurry—dinner at seven here at the hotel."

It was clear that Hartford was surprised, and Shotterly would have understood why had he known that another Hartford sat at the other side of the pillar.

"Well, if you really——"

"All right; I'm glad you'll do it. Seven o'clock." And off Shotterly hurried. He swung aboard a trolley car, and in ten minutes was home. Zoe had not returned. Shotterly dressed quickly, and then left a few words, written lovingly, telling her he would not be home till late. Then he went back to the Astoria, and

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reached there only two minutes before his father-in-law arrived.

The two men met and shook hands. The mayor's manner was important and constrained, as befitted a man who felt that he had a duty to perform; but not a trace of constraint, not a sign of annoyance, did Shotterly himself display.

"I received your letter only this afternoon; I am delighted that it reached me in time to meet you. Now, won't you make your headquarters with us? Or would you——"

"No, I thank you." The mayor cleared his throat, embarrassed. "I think I should feel more—free, shall I say? Perhaps you, yourself, would be the same; and, too, there are certain lines of—ahem!—investigation—" He was not a man who was accustomed to be embarrassed, but there was something in Shotterly's manner, in his bright assurance, in his obliviousness to disagreeable possibilities, that disconcerted him.

The mayor was a large man, tallish and more than tending toward stoutness; with bovine fixity of gaze and slowness of movement; not without the milk of human kindness, though apt to be dominated by self-love; one accustomed to chew the cud of his own reflections and to find it very sweet; a man, on the whole,

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honest and of ability. Of such, at times, is the kingdom of politics.

"Whatever will be pleasantest for you, will certainly please us," said Shotterly cordially.

The mayor, as he looked at him, could not but reflect that Zoe could not well have found a handsomer husband or one of better presence. "What a pity that he does not do credit to my family!" he thought. Then he said:

"You will dine with me here, this evening, of course; and, as my stay in New York is necessarily very limited—only a hasty flying trip——"

It was with some difficulty that Shotterly, at this, retained his equable calm. Only a flying trip! And in that hasty trip he had planned to break up a household and to separate a husband and wife. And only a hasty flying trip! But Shotterly gave no sign of his anger, his contempt.

"Yes; just a hasty run, you know," Malrose went on, so self-centered that it never occurred to him that there could be more than one viewpoint for his words and acts.

"I'll be pleased to dine with you some other time; perhaps to-morrow, if we can arrange it, and if your flying trip" (there was an accent on this that was lost on Malrose) "admits so long a stay, and if we both can make it conven-

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ient; but to-night you must be my guest, instead of my being yours."

"But, really, Mr. Shotterly, I don't think that I ought——"

"Yes; I've arranged a pleasant party—just a few that I know you'll like to meet; all men, of course——"

Malrose got to his feet rigidly. His face turned pale. He braced himself, with his feet apart, and, steer-like, angrily lowered his head.

"Do you mean—do you mean that you have presumed——" He gasped heavily.

"Yes; jnst a small party; quite select; a few friends of mine that I knew you would like to meet."

Malrose fixed him with his heavy gaze. "And you really dare to tell me, sir—me!—that you have actually presumed to put me on terms of equality with your companions, your—your associates?"

The certainty of victory aided Shotterly to remain imperturbable. He wanted Malrose to put himself even more completely in the wrong.

"Yes; I certainly did just what you say." Shotterly spoke with a firmness that ought to have warned the older man.

"Then, Mr. Shotterly, I will tell you that I can countenance no such arrangement."

Shotterly's voice took on a lower tone.

THE PREDICAMENT OF SHOTTERLY

"These gentlemen, Mr. Malrose, friends of mine, have been invited and have accepted."

"I don't care, sir; I don't care. That is entirely your own responsibility, sir. You should have known that coming here on such an errand as has called me, I can accept no invitations to meet your friends socially. And—and you well know my opinion in regard to those associates, sir."

"Well, just as you wish, of course; I think I can so explain to the gentlemen that they will properly understand the matter."

"I had, indeed," continued the mayor, "planned to come some time to New York, after proper arrangements had been made, to meet some of the people whom I should like to know; on some trip when I had more leisure, and when there were no—ah—unpleasant details to occupy my time. But, sir, when I speak of meeting a few people here, I mean such as New York honors—prominent citizens, noted for wealth or philanthropy; financiers, wielding monetary power; perhaps some public spirited city official. But this, sir, that you have had the hardihood to arrange!" He glared and breathed hard.

"It was my certainty that such a desire," said Shotterly suavely, "that left me, even though at the last moment, to get a few.

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such men together. Of course, though, I can tell them that you do not wish to meet them. Mr. Stuart Ward, for example——”

“Who’s that?” The voice was sharp.

“Mr. Stuart Ward, the millionaire——”

“Is he one of them?”

“One of the party, yes; I left him just a little while ago. Reverend Doctor Fieldhill, Vice-President Harlans, of the Thirtieth National Bank——”

Malrose gasped inarticulately.

“Mr. Heating, the City Comptroller—I thought you would like to meet such a city official—Mr. Waters, famous for the construction of important public works; young Hartford, son of the former United States Senator——”

Malrose sank back into his chair speechless.

“And the dinner is arranged for seven o’clock.”

CHAPTER II

AT THE DINNER TO MALROSE

MALROSE recovered himself with a quickness that Shotterly had not anticipated, and it gave the younger man a better appreciation of at least one phase of his ability.

"Ah!" and Malrose smiled blandly. "Yes; now I understand; and I beg to say, Mr. Shotterly, that if you had condescended to explain to me we should have avoided the necessity of unpleasant words on either side. No," he added, waving his arm; "no, you do not now need to explain; it was a misunderstanding on both sides, and, as such, had better be forgotten." His voice had a mooring tone.

"Then, of course, you will——"

"Certainly, certainly, Mr. Shotterly; I shall be pleased to meet the gentlemen of whom you spoke." (He was about to say "your friends," but a lingering doubt made him use the cautious designation.) "As to the matters that were especially to occupy my time on this brief visit, this flying trip, and which I had thought we

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might talk over quietly while at dinner, they can of course be deferred till we have proper opportunity to go into them." And with that the worthy mayor went to his room to unpack his bag and to dress.

Hartford, meanwhile, even more amazed, had gone to his boarding-house, on West Eleventh Street, for the same purpose. It seemed like an odd dream, like something fantastic, unreal. For a few moments he suspected the possibility of some confidence scheme; and, as he had come to the city to be a literary man, he thought it would be a great thing if, like one of our widely known American writers, he could signalize his entrance into the metropolis by the unmasking and capture of a swindler. He had read that story in his local paper with the greatest interest, but had never thought it possible that any such adventure could come to him. Why, if this sort of thing should continue! But he came to himself with the reflection that, after all, he could not seriously think that this strange Mr. Shotterly was dishonest. Well, then, was it an actual and modern case of the man in the parable who went out and picked up his guests at random when others had disappointed him? He flushed at this a little shamefacedly, for it was on account of economical reasons that he had gone to a boarding-

AT THE DINNER TO MALROSE

house instead of to a hotel, and he was glad that among his slender belongings was a suit of evening clothes.

He was the first of the guests to put in an appearance, and was there some minutes before seven o'clock because he felt sure that, after all, there had been a mistake, and he wanted to clear it up.

He found, as he had hoped, Shotterly alone. "Now, see here," he said; "just tell me, if you will, why you asked me to this dinner." He was good-humoredly puzzled.

"Why, it was just as I told you. I wanted you and Mayor Malrose to meet each other——"

"Yes, of course, I know all that; and I remember reading about him as a mayor of advanced ideas, who is attracting a good deal of public attention. But why should I be asked to meet him?"

"Oh, I wanted you to know him, and also Comptroller Heating, Doctor Fieldhill, Mr. Harlans the banker, Stuart Ward the millionaire——"

Hartford laughed. "Say, I think I begin to see; oughtn't I to have come in character?"

It was Shotterly's turn to be puzzled. "In character? I don't understand."

"Yes; and why didn't you tell me what part you wanted me to take? I suppose, as you let

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me come in ordinary evening clothes, that I'm to be merely the President, or the Prince of Wales, or something neat and simple like that—some character with no gilt and knee-breeches."

Shotterly was more puzzled, but he liked the look of frank amusement on the other's face. "Really, I don't understand. All I can say is, just be yourself, Mr. Hartford."

"And may I ask if you are to take one of the parts, and which one?"

"No. I'm just myself. But what do you mean; what are you trying to get at, anyway?"

"Isn't there to be any one to take the part of the Emperor of Germany?—or of Li-Hung-Chang?"

"Now, see here; frankly, I don't understand you. You've got some joke that I don't see. I have merely asked you to meet the gentlemen I named and a few others, and——"

"Oh, I say; I know I've come to the city only to-day, but really——"

Shotterly eyed him curiously. "You said you were Mr. Henry Hartford, didn't you?"

"Henry Hartford! Pardon me. I am Marshall Hartford."

"Brother to Henry?"

"Never heard of him."

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"Son of former United States Senator Hartford?"

"Not the slightest relationship."

Shotterly's face fell; he was clearly disconcerted. And so Hartford said: "I see now, of course, where the misunderstanding lay, and so I shall——"

"No, no, I beg of you!" exclaimed Shotterly, instantly recovering himself. "Of course there's no use my trying to deny that there's been a misunderstanding." He and Hartford smiled at each other. "But the fault was all my own, and you mustn't go away. It would really hurt me if you should. To oblige me, and for no other reason, you accepted my invitation to dinner. It was awfully nice of you, and I shall be awfully sorry if you don't stay."

"But I'm not in character; I'm just plain Marshall Hartford——"

"That's all right." Shotterly chuckled. "It doesn't make a bit of difference. I'm sure we'll all be better pleased to meet you than the other Mr. Hartford, whom I never saw and don't know anything about, and I hope you won't find either the dinner or the company altogether a bore."

Hartford hesitated. "I don't like to think of staying under——"

"It means nothing to anybody else so long

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as I'm pleased. The whole idea of the dinner and the choice of the guests lay entirely with me" (he chuckled again), "and you're here as my friend. Only," he added with a quizzically good-humored smile, "may I ask that you let the joke stay entirely between ourselves, at least for the present? I don't want you to say or do a thing to give a false impression as to your identity; but, to be perfectly frank with you, there's some one that I'd just as soon keep in the dark. You see, I show you my hand; and now you won't spoil my effort, I'm sure."

Of course he wouldn't. Didn't Shotterly, with that handsome, pleasant, taking way, know he wouldn't! It was not for nothing that Shotterly was sometimes termed "the irresistible."

"But how about the others?" said Hartford. "Do you mind, since we are having such a heart-to-heart talk, telling me just which ones are the real thing and which are pinchbeck?"

Shotterly laughed delightedly. "That's a great idea. Wouldn't it be a good one if I'd made mistakes all round—if the minister were an ordinary layman, the millionaire poor, and the banker one of his own bookkeepers?" The two laughed together, and then Shotterly went on: "All I can say is that the others are the real thing to the best of my knowledge and be-

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lief, and all I can ask is that if you discover counterfeits you will be so good as to keep it to yourself till the dinner's over."

At that moment Doctor Fieldhill appeared, then Mayor Malrose came up and was introduced, and then came Mr. Heating, Mr. Waters, Mr. Harlans, and Mr. Ward, and the group passed into the dining-room.

Shotterly assumed the head of the table and presided with sublime ease. He was at the summit of happiness. The dinner was perfect and not too extravagant. There was but little wine—this from regard, in particular, to the mayor and Doctor Fieldhill. From the first the conversation was easy, genial, and free. To Shotterly the golden atmosphere of the afternoon filled the room, and that, together with the importance of the stake for which he was playing, and for which he knew he was playing so well, moved him to heights of brilliancy beyond himself. Was it possible that, only a few hours before, he had paced along the sidewalk out there wondering what he could possibly do to avert destruction? The voice of the mayor, serene, satisfied—rotund and resonant though hushed to decorous conversational key—told him that indeed it was more than possible.

"It is a pleasure, a real pleasure, to meet in

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this delightful way such friends of Mr. Shotterly, my son-in-law." A cautious man, and a watchful, Malrose had waited till the dinner was well under way before hazarding any such remark, for it was hard for him to overcome entirely a feeling that perhaps there was something wrong about it after all. But no. He not only saw Shotterly take the head of the table: he saw that to none did it appear a matter of surprise. In looks and tones and words these men of large affairs appeared to consider Shotterly one of themselves. Malrose was impressed, too, being keen in some kinds of observation, by the warm admiration, the regard, that young Hartford had for Shotterly, and by the frank companionship that somehow seemed to exist between them. "Um! I think—I think that I owe John an apology, or at least an explanation—an explanation will be enough—some easy, light reference to sources of information, to the liability of humanity to err, to the fault lying somewhat with himself because of his not giving me, a public man and his near connection, some idea of who his friends really are. And Zoe—mistaken, poor girl; or, more likely, angered by something, and writing me in petulance. I must talk very plainly to her; and I can not altogether regret that the letters of Holman pointed in confirma-

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tory direction, because through it all I have for the first time come to a real understanding of my son-in-law. It always did seem incredible to me that one of my family could marry a man who isn't a success."

Coming thus to a conclusion so entirely satisfactory as regarded Shotterly, the mayor completely threw aside restraint in the expression of his ideas, and expounded, with a brevity and force of which Shotterly had not supposed him capable, the opinions and theories that had made him and his mayoralty famous. The others listened with close interest, or interrupted now and then with questions, comments, or suggestions.

But at length Malrose laughingly checked himself. "It's so easy for a man to talk about his own ideas," he said; and then he seconded Shotterly in his efforts to make every one at the table share in the talk. From time to time the mayor joined in. When, for example, the subject of trusts was brought up, he said, after the subject had been fought over, back and forth:

"And there is another class of trust that is not so often spoken of, and whose importance is not realized. The multi-millionaire really holds his millions in trust, and can not claim the privileges of the ordinary private citizen.

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He owes great duties to the community whose laws and institutions have enabled him to amass his wealth, and he owes the people, too, a large insight into his methods of spending money and into the ways of his life. He is, essentially, no longer a private citizen, but a member of royalty—a money king—and the people have a right to do what, if he were anything but a king, would be called prying. Then, too, there is the trust of every man in power—the trust that is put into the hands of every one who is higher in station or of better education than the average. There is the trust of the lawyer not to fight for the evil side; the trust of the doctor to care freely for the poor; the trust of the editor to print not merely what the public will read but what it ought to read—the trust of every man who has won prominence or power over others to use that power in the highest way.” Then he checked himself again and said that, in the company of these friends of his son-in-law, he found himself continually tempted to overtalk. And Hartford smiled so gaily when he said this, and the others looked so politely interested, that the mayor’s heart swelled with pride.

Then one after another (except, indeed, Hartford, who was happy but silent) again spoke freely as subject after subject was intro-

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duced. The company, chosen so at random, were happily congenial in a high degree and readily assimilated.

And finally Waters, the engineer, spoke of his work. He told of the Croton River region, some fifty miles to the north of New York, where the city owns immense tracts of land, and has cleared away houses and barns, and put in miles of road, and converted valleys into lakes. He told of whole villages moved from the levels and lifted up on the hillsides, of roads changed, of ancient farmhouses torn down or moved away. The poetry, the dramatic interest of it, appealed to him, and his eyes glowed as he talked.

"And do you not often come across strange incidents?" asked Doctor Fieldhill.

"Yes," he said, "I have known of curious cases, and some have impressed me strongly." There was a general murmur of interest. "Tell us some of them," said Ward.

Waters was thoughtfully silent for a little; then he said: "Only this morning I was standing in the center of a valley that is to be flooded to-morrow. On one side was an old house, built long before the Revolution, but without the quaint dignity that we look for in the houses of that early period. It was hard and stern of outline—I have sometimes fancied that houses

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take on the character of the people who build them.”

“ Yes, and sometimes, which is still stranger, they seem to take on the characteristics of the people who live in them, thus altering the very aspect of a house from that which its builder gave to it,” said Doctor Fieldhill. “ It has often seemed to me that an old house, naturally beautiful, may acquire a forbidding and disagreeable aspect from the very personality of a new owner. I suppose that peculiarities of character in the human occupant find subtle expression in points which, though minor in themselves, intangibly affect the whole appearance. I know it seems fanciful, and yet I can’t help thinking it’s so. But here I am preaching.” And he laughed at himself good-humoredly.

“ Well,” said Waters, “ this old house, whether owing to the character of its builder or that of a later occupant, certainly looked cold and hard enough. I use the past tense because by now it has been destroyed—it was undoubtedly torn down this afternoon. The last occupant, the man whose ownership ended to-day, is named Zenas Miffin. Through the valley (a beautiful little valley it is, too) runs a brook that flows into the Croton. A road leads past the house I have described, and right across the valley and past another house. This one

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is fully as old as the first, and is just as attractive as the other was forbidding, for it is all gables and soft corners, with a big porch and all that. It has just been moved up the hillside, out of the valley, and, though it is so fine and dignified, it looks bare in contrast with what it was when it was surrounded by the garden and shrubbery of a century and a half's growth."

"I know just what it looks like," put in Shotterly as Waters paused. "Mammoth stone wall built across the end of the valley; apple-orchard straggling up from the brook; a clump of blackberry bushes; a deserted garden of phlox, dahlias, and box; mysterious tyrant on one side of the stream—a pretty girl on the other. Isn't that it, Mr. Waters?"

Waters laughed. "It's telepathy," he said. "When I stopped my horse beside the fine old house, so bare in its new surroundings, there, on the porch, was the prettiest girl I have ever seen."

"Evidently an interesting region," put in Malrose, his eyes twinkling; "much more than the scenery attractive."

"Indeed, yes," responded Waters; and then he went on, with a change back to seriousness: "It makes me feel almost sad, sometimes, when I am destroying or moving houses and roads, to

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think of the wreck that my reservoir building causes, even though the city pays the damages; and this morning, as I stood by that house, looking down into the valley, there somehow came into my head that old text about the man who destroys his neighbor's landmark. There is such a text, isn't there, doctor?" he said, turning toward the minister.

"Yes," said Doctor Fieldhill, smiling; "but if I were you I should only remember that Hezekiah 'made a pool, and a conduit, and brought water into the city.' His work certainly seemed to meet with approval."

"Thank you, doctor; I'll try to remember about old Hezekiah when next I feel qualms about having driven a pretty girl and a pretty house up a hill. And this particular girl was certainly handsome. I was about to speak to her, and to ask if, as engineer in charge, I could do anything for her"——

"There are evidently certain compensating features about being an engineer," interpolated Harlans.

——"when I noticed that she was intently watching the other side of the valley. Then I looked across there myself, and I saw two men leaving the grim old house. One, even at that distance, seemed hard and unlovable, like his house; the other was a young chap. Evidently,

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thought I, I am in at the death, and witnessing these people, possibly the last of a race and all that, leaving the home of their ancestors. The old man turned at the gate and looked back at his house, and from the way he held himself I saw he was sort of solemn about it. The young man didn't look at the house at all. He just looked across the valley at us——”

“Us!” put in the mayor with a chuckle.

Waters laughed. “Well, looked at the girl, then; and he waved his hat, and then he and the older man seemed to be saying a few words to each other, and then they parted without even a handshake. The young man walked off, by a foot-path across a field, and turned just once and waved again to the girl as he reached a fringe of trees that in a moment more hid him. The old man went off more slowly, right up the road, and kept looking back at the house that had been his home all his life. I felt rather sorry for him, though I knew who he was and what a hard reputation he had gained. And that brings me to ‘the story of his life.’”

“A man with a past?” said Shotterly.

“Distinctly. And it happened in this way, according to the story that was told me about him some days ago:

“Miffin and the owner of that house opposite his, Henry Wharton, were rivals as young

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men, and had quarreled, and when the Civil War broke out they both enlisted in the same regiment of cavalry. One day, after a sharp fight with a body of guerrillas, the two were captured, bound, and thrown into a deserted cabin, and a single man was left to watch them.

“The two got the idea that the guerrillas might hang them as spies, and at any rate they knew they were in for a term in a Confederate prison unless they could escape. Both of them were tied tight, hand and foot, and they lay side by side.

“Darkness settled down, and the soldier still remained at the door. Then Mifflin suddenly threw his wrists, bandaged as they were, right against Wharton’s mouth. Wharton almost cried out, but restrained himself, and in a moment understood. He gnawed at the bonds with his teeth, very quietly, and in a little while Mifflin’s hands were free. Very cautiously Mifflin unbound the thongs on his legs and melted off into the darkness like a shadow. At first Wharton did not understand. He thought that Mifflin was waiting a little for precaution’s sake. But at length he understood. A big owl hooted; the night grew darker; the sentinel struck a match to light his pipe, and saw that one prisoner had escaped.”

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"And what became of Wharton?" asked Harlans eagerly.

"Another party of Union cavalry came along, most opportunely, and released him. He told his story, and Miffin was execrated in the army and hated and shunned after he came home. But with an intense stubbornness he lived on, and gradually made a few friends, though for the most part he lived alone."

"A curious story," said Malrose thoughtfully. "One wonders how a man like that appears to himself—how he could ever, after doing such an act, look himself in the face again, so to speak."

"It seems to me," said Doctor Fieldhill, "that the explanation of how a man can act with baseness and still be friends with himself and face the world is, that if he were of the kind whom a sense of baseness would crush and humiliate, he would not, in the first place, commit the base act. The very commission of a base or contemptible act usually shows that the man is not, temperamentally, influenced by the usual standards of honor."

"They certainly say that Miffin has always held his head up and has never given any sign that he considers his despicable act as anything but perfectly proper," said Waters.

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"A curious thing," he continued, after a pause, "happened this morning after I had watched Mifflin and his companion go away from their house. I was thinking of this story, and of something or other that had been told me of an unsatisfactory love-affair between the girl I had just seen and the young man who had waved his farewell across the valley to her; and then I thought of how curious it was that I should be turning that valley into a great lake, right between the homes of the two old enemies and of the two who might be lovers. I began to look on myself as something of a fate, don't you know. And suddenly, standing beside the bridge across the brook, I noticed an old negro woman—a sort of doctor, so the countryside considers her. She is one of a very curious colony living up there—negroes who are direct descendants of those who lived in that part of New York as slaves and remained after being freed. I knew this old woman but she was not a fortune-teller, or anything of that sort, so far as I ever heard, but just a little strange and impressive and not without wisdom as to herbs and healing. She seemed as if she intended to speak as I passed by, and so I slowed up my horse; but all she said was—and that was the queer part of it—something apparently from the Bible, about waters rising up, and then,

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solemnly, that text about waters quenching love."

"'Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it,' " quoted Doctor Fieldhill.

"Yes; and there was something really impressive about her way of saying it; and I suppose it was only fancy that made me think that she accented my own name, Waters, as if I could possibly have anything to do with the love-affairs of that girl and the young man; though of course it was I who had ordered the valley to be flooded, thereby driving one family away and the other family up the hill. But the whole scene stays with me. And I wish I knew more about the queer negro woman."

"She's Mammy Blackhammer," said Hartford. He had listened to the tale of Waters with an intensity of interest which only Shotterly, trained to observe, had noted, and now he spoke almost as if oblivious of the party about him. "She's Mammy Blackhammer, and folks say she's a hundred years old. She was once a slave herself, and is credited with second sight. She is the last of the negroes who were actually slaves in this State."

Everybody turned toward him in astonishment, but by a strong effort he maintained an

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outward calm, even though the face of Waters, turned upon him, showed a sudden question, a sudden surprise.

“I know that country and the people up there pretty well,” said Hartford quietly.

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CHAPTER III

A STRANGER ON NEWSPAPER ROW

THE next morning the spot where Hartford had lived was flooded with water. Elinor Wharton, her mind busied with thoughts of him and of the love which he had never put into words, watched the great pond rise within the stone-walled valley and gradually obliterate brook and road and then the very site of the old Mifflin homestead, and meanwhile Hartford himself was making his first attempt to find work in New York City.

He had little basis for his hope of succeeding there. He had had a fairly good education, and, since leaving school in the Western city which had been his home, had found some opportunity for the gratification of his taste for reading and for composition. He had written a few short stories, and two or three of them had been published in the minor magazines, and he had had miscellaneous work accepted, from time to time, by newspapers or syndicates. Left alone in the world by the death of his

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parents the previous year, he had, at the dying request of his father, gone to live with his uncle, Zenas Mifflin, in the Croton River country.

Mifflin had written a number of times to Hartford's father outlining plans for branching out in business speculation, and hinting plainly that, should Marshall join him, it would result in mutual advantage. Marshall's father knew that Mifflin had considerable wealth; that he had inherited money and had afterward been successful in various speculations; and so he had urged his son to go to him—and then Marshall had vainly waited for the talked-of plans to materialize.

When the breaking up of his uncle's home left Hartford free, it was to New York that he instantly turned. He and Mifflin had got on together but poorly. The uncle was too selfish, too sour, to appreciate Hartford's willingness to help him or to be patient with his open frankness, and so to neither was the parting a matter of regret. Their last words, indeed, were sharp and bitter. They had lived on terms of forced neutrality during the less than a year that Hartford had made his home there, and the only other member of the household had been an old servant.

With less than a hundred dollars and with a very few good clothes (including those which

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were to come in so opportunely for the Malrose dinner), Hartford went to New York. He was poorly equipped, he was inadequately trained, to pit himself, a stranger in the great city, to bear away any of its prizes. But within himself Hartford did not feel a doubt but that the work of a writer was to be the work of his life. He was sure he was fitted for it.

On that first forenoon of effort he called at the offices of three leading publishing houses. "I can read manuscript; I can review books; I have, I am told, a good literary—" But no matter how confidently he began this formula, or how modestly, or how he altered it, he noticed that it was absolutely ineffective. His hearers were polite, but he saw that they were politely bored, politely amused, or politely irritated. The hopelessness of it all swiftly came to him. He had so often been told, and had so often read, that if a man has the ability and the willingness to work, he is sure to succeed, that it was with a shock that he realized that there is something far more important than either ability or willingness—opportunity. All he asked was a chance to show what he could do. He found that nobody wanted him to try. He began to realize that he might never find an opportunity to try.

At luncheon, up-town, at a Broadway res-

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taurant, he thought over his prospects seriously. He was not the kind of man to give up a struggle lightly, but he was too bright not to understand some of the conditions as he had never understood them before.

All around him in the restaurant were eager, prosperous men, and, looking through the window, he could see the mighty flood of Broadway traffic and of Broadway life rolling by. Four men at a near-by table ate as if engaged in a contest of speed, but most of those in the room, though there was an air of hurry about them and though the very atmosphere was instinct with pushing life, ate with a certain cool deliberation and steadiness. And therein Hartford saw a lesson.

And he was thrilled by it all. It was like a call to battle—he would be part of it, he would take part in it. And, beginning in a new way, he would try to get on the staff of a newspaper instead of continuing to ply the publishing houses. Fortunately, he did not know what a host of trained newspaper men are constantly arriving in the city and attempting to get a foothold, and what a host of disappointed newspaper men are constantly leaving and seeking openings in the West or South. Within himself he felt an intense confidence in his own ability. That was really his strongest point.

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Having decided to join the staff of a newspaper, he also decided to begin his efforts without any delay. He knew, in a general way, something of the characteristics of the principal newspapers of the city, and had, in fact, read several of them that day. He decided to make his first attempt with the *Diurnal*, which, under a new management, was making considerable stir in the newspaper world; and so, in a little while, he was going down Broadway in a cable-car, with its peculiar sliding jolt. He got off at City Hall Park, and breathed deep and looked about him before going on to the newspaper office. He felt, as he had before felt that day, like a young knight about to run a tilt for glory, perhaps for life. And what presumption was this, he thought for a sinking moment, to run full tilt against New York! But he threw off the feeling and stepped briskly across the park. To his left rose the graceful lines of the City Hall. To his right was the ungraceful post-office. A throng of hurrying people passed him. Another throng was going in the same direction with him. The faces were eager, earnest, keen, full of life.

He looked at the row of newspaper buildings. And this was Newspaper Row! Buildings low or buildings high; buildings of brick or of stone or of both; buildings flat-topped or

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rising in peak or dome; and he knew that there was as great a difference in the papers themselves as in the buildings that housed them.

It was during an exciting period of the Boer War, and in front of each newspaper office was a bulletin-board, and at each board was gathered a little crowd of people. He entered the Diurnal building and stepped into the elevator. "I want to see the city editor," he said. Fortunately, he knew that the city editor was the one to ask for, and he was put off at the proper floor. On a half-open door, whose upper part was of glass, he read the words, "City Room." At the moment there chanced to be no boy there, and so, hesitatingly, he stepped inside and walked past several desks at which sat men busily at work. None spoke to him; each was bent over his writing. It looked as if they were strenuously contesting to see which could fastest cover sheets of paper with words. The room was long and filled with desks and chairs, and there seemed to be a division into two sections. He found afterward that one part was for the morning edition men and the other for those of the evening edition. In all, some thirty men were in sight, and there were many unoccupied chairs.

A boy, prematurely sagacious of face, met him. He was clearly surprised to see a stranger

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walking there. "Who do you want to see?" he asked.

"The city editor," said Hartford.

"Morning or evening?" said the boy.

There was turmoil in the very atmosphere, although there was but little noise. There was energy, excitement, swift and inexorable push. The air seemed charged with the electricity of force, of overmastering haste, even though the faces of the men were quiet and unperturbed, and though only their swift-moving fingers and the sheets of copy showed how fast they were working. It was glorious, but it was not literature; and it was for literature that Hartford had come to New York.

"The morning editor," he said. There was a zone of quieter action at the farther end of the long room, and he divined correctly that the men of the morning edition were there.

The boy was on the point of asking Hartford to step outside to wait, but his air and bearing were such that the lad hesitated.

"What name, and what business?" he asked.

"Mr. Hartford. But I'll explain to the editor myself."

"Sit down and I'll see if he's in," said the boy. There was a vacant desk there, and Hartford sat down at it. He thought it would be fine if he could call that desk his own.

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As he waited he looked about him with intense interest. He did not, at this first sight of a New York newspaper office, see enough to justify the ideas that he had preconceived as to the greatness and dignity of the life and work. Even when he had planned to step at once into a career with some publishing house, he had felt a deep respect for the great newspapers. But as he sat there he could see nothing of the broad, deep plans. He saw nothing that could suggest to him the scope, the fierce energy, the tremendous expenditures, of which he was afterward to learn. Men writing rapidly at desks were to him just men writing rapidly at desks, and they were nothing more.

A small boy dashed up to the desk of the city editor of the evening paper—a man slender, keen, suggesting the sharpness of a blade. His desk was not far from where Hartford was sitting.

“The Globe’s beat us!” exclaimed the boy. “It’s lost 520 men in that last battle and we lost only 400!”

The editor smiled grimly and turned toward a stout man who sat at a desk close by. “Cobbetts, you’re beaten on that last battle by 120 men.”

Stout Cobbetts flushed with annoyance, and

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called sharply to a boy who was just disappearing with a handful of copy. "Here, boy; come back with that! Brown, change that red fudge, quick! Make the loss of the British 579 killed and wounded, according to the latest returns, just received. There's just a quarter of a minute to do it in. The Globe won't dare climb higher than that. Rhodes, see that the 579 gets out on the bulletin-board."

He turned to the city editor with a smile of contentment. "Did you say the Globe beat me, Tom? Not by more than half a minute, and it doesn't often do even that."

Then the telegraph editor again bent his head over his desk and continued his work of rewriting, with new adjectives and new details of description, the substance of a cablegram that had been received early that day and which, under different head-lines, ornamented by varied designs in huge capitals, had done duty in a number of the editions of the Diurnal. Beside him lay a map of Africa and books of reference.

Hartford was shocked more than amused. He did not know that in spite of the rivalry as to the number of men lost the telegraph editor was keeping within the essential truth of the despatch actually before him. He did not realize that, nowadays, the American public is not

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satisfied with war news once a week or so, but demands a swift succession of news items throughout every day that a war continues. He did not know it was not economy that prompted the use of the original cablegram in new form, but that it was the only one that had come that day; nor did he know that within a few hours there would be in the office, for the morning edition, from a heavily paid correspondent, a special cablegram of over two thousand words, for which a great sum in tolls would freely be spent.

The floor littered with paper, the desks and tables, the long row of telephone booths, and the quick, sharp words of those who answered calls, all fascinated him. At a long table, double-lined with shirt-sleeved copy-readers, manuscript was being rapidly read, altered, and blue-penciled. Hartford noticed that these men, too, though they worked swiftly, showed no outward appearance of haste.

The city editor of the morning edition sat a little farther away. After a while the boy came back. "He don't know your name," he said, "and he wants to know your business." The boy said it nicely enough, but Hartford flushed.

"I am Mr. Marshall Hartford," he said, "and I should like to see the city editor about

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going on the staff. I should like to talk with him personally."

The boy again went off, and this time remained longer than before, for he knew how very slight was Hartford's chance of getting a personal interview with the editor, and so he waited till he had a good opportunity to present the case.

The glamour of it was creeping over Hartford. The magnetism was getting into his brain. This was life! How he wished he were one of the busy, eager company.

There was a clock in the middle of the copy-readers' table, and on the thin editor's desk was a similar one, and on each of these was a set of movable slides, and on them Hartford read:

Next Edition is the 6 O'Clock.

Last Form Closes at 2.

He studied about that sign for a while, for at first it was meaningless to him. When he finally began to see that it must mean that the copy for a "6 o'clock" edition was really all finished and put in type early in the afternoon, the idea tickled him.

A door from an inside office opened and a young man hurried to the thin editor's desk. The editor looked a trifle annoyed. His voice cut sharply. "Brown, in the list of vice-presi-

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dents in that bank story we had two that are dead and used their photographs. Get them out quick. Must be right in the next edition."

A few men smiled without looking up. "This time it was you that beat the Globe," said Cobbetts slyly; whereupon the knife-like man nodded silently.

There was a sharp ring from the telephone nearest Hartford, and the boy who took the message hurried to the city editor of the evening edition. "From police headquarters. Fire on West Broadway. Third alarm right on top of the first."

The thin editor looked around the room. He saw no reporter disengaged. His eyes flashed and a look of nervous worry appeared. Hartford thought he looked as if he had been working too hard, and was sure he worried about his work after he left the office. He afterward found that practically all newspaper men do that. He wondered what it would feel like to be sent out on an important fire assignment himself.

A dapper little chap, carrying a cane with the point held up and forward, came in, walking with a quick but mincing step. The editor looked at him, at his perfectly fitting coat and his white-duck trousers, and the flower in his buttonhole, with quizzically impatient dislike.

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"Mr. Streets!" The finicky chap steered his way, with up-pointed cane, toward him.

"Have you anything to report?"

"No; the story was a fake," said Streets.

"All right. There's a big fire on West Broadway, near Houston. Third alarm already. Get there quick and telephone down."

"But—" began Streets. He looked ruefully at his white trousers.

The editor's patience gave way. With the moments flying toward the time of going to press for the night edition, and in his mind's eye seeing reporters from all the other papers already on the spot and getting news of heroic rescues, hairbreadth escapes, and tremendous fire loss, he leaped to his feet, seized Streets by the arm, and with face aglow with anxiety and enthusiasm walked—almost ran, indeed—with him toward the door; not as if actually pushing him, but as if in ardent partnership in getting the news. As the two hurried across the floor the editor kept up a quick run of staccato talk about the possible importance of the fire, and did not cease until Streets was actually on his way.

Hartford looked again toward the city editor of the morning edition, and saw that the office boy who had his name and message had at length seized an opportunity to speak to him. Not

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till now had Hartford had an opportunity to see the morning editor's face. Long and oddly square-sided it was, with a high, straight forehead. The front of the head was bald, though the man could not have been over forty, and his face was smooth-shaven, save for the slightest possible side-whiskers.

At first sight it was an almost expressionless face, and Hartford could think of it only as of a fire-shovel with some holes in it. As the office boy spoke to him the editor reached out and seized a pile of papers with both hands. The arms were long and thin and the hands large. Hartford thought it was like picking up something with a pair of tongs. The editor said something to the boy and bent his head again over his desk without even glancing in Hartford's direction. The boy came back. "There isn't any vacancy," he said.

"But—but I should like to talk with him myself," said Hartford.

"He says he's too busy to be seen," said the boy.

Bewildered, Hartford rose. He was on the point of protesting or of sending another message. But something in his throat choked him. His pride was hurt. Well, it seemed as if this desk were not to be his after all—that he was not to be one of the men sent out by the Diurnal

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to report big fires or anything else. He walked toward the door. He did not look again toward the editor who would not even let him present his case. He felt sore, injured, humiliated. It was not so much the disappointment as the way in which the disappointment was administered. He quietly went out and rejoined the crowd in front of the bulletin-board. He read the announcement of the latest cablegram with its report of 579 lost, and even in his disappointment he had to smile. He saw that the Globe had not beaten it, and that the telegraph editor had been right. He felt a sense of pride, of victory, and he wondered why any kind of a victory for the Diurnal could mean anything to him.

He wandered back and forth along Newspaper Row, but the lump in his throat kept him from making any new attempt. To-day he could try no further. To-morrow he would make another effort to get on the staff of a publishing house. That, after all, was what he had come to New York for.

He stood for awhile at the entrance to the Diurnal building and saw Streets come back. The finicky chap's coat was wet and his white-duck trousers were ruined. "This settles me," he was saying to another reporter as he entered the building; "it was nothing but meanness,

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sending me off to a fire in these clothes, and I'll go over to the morning paper."

Hartford at length went back to his boarding-house, but found that he had little appetite for dinner. Later, he went down-town again, and once more wandered along Newspaper Row. And while he was standing again at the entrance to the Diurnal building, it chanced that Stuart Ward, the millionaire, rang the bell of the Shotterly apartments, up-town.

CHAPTER IV

IN THE LIGHT OF THE CANDLES

THE Malrose dinner at the Astoria had in every respect been a success, and at its close there had been a general desire expressed to meet the mayor again. This pleasantly embarrassed him.

"I—er—had not expected to stay in the city more than for to-night and a part of to-morrow," he said; "just a flying trip. I have, indeed, now decided to stay over to-morrow night, too; but there are a number of things I must do—er—some matters of public import, among them, and I feel that I really must spend some hours at the home of my daughter—of Mr. Shotterly," he said, smiling at John with a cordiality in which there was nothing of condescension.

He finally accepted an invitation to take luncheon with Doctor Fieldhill; and, with Shotterly, to dine at seven o'clock at the Union League Club, as guests of the banker, Harlans. Ward, on account of his expected business in-

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terests in the mayor's city, was determined to see him again, but did not speak among the first, for he wished not to appear too eager. When, on bidding the mayor good-night, he said that he hoped there would be an opportunity of meeting him the next day, Malrose puckered his face in good-humored perplexity.

"I can't say," he began; he liked Ward, and felt that he should like to know him better.

"I should be very sorry to miss seeing you again," said Ward. He was a man who was accustomed to having his way, and there was something in his pleasant look and something in his tone that made the mayor, without recognizing the influence, wish to please him.

"My hours, during to-morrow, are so much taken up—but I should really like—" The mayor stopped again, still perplexed.

"How about to-morrow evening?" said Ward. "I can call here at the hotel at almost any hour you may name."

"I am staying here to-night," said the mayor; "but to-morrow I am going to make my headquarters at Mr. Shotterly's—that is, if he and Zoe still have room for me," he said, smiling at John. Ward noticed the words, and divined that there had been some misunderstanding which had now been cleared away. He looked from one to the other, keenly but with-

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out any sign of scrutiny. An idea came to him—but, surely it was too absurd—and he looked again, and more sharply, at Shotterly. This time his glance was not without a sign of admiration.

“Delighted, of course; we never planned anything else than to have you with us,” said Shotterly. And Ward saw more clearly that his conjecture as to a misunderstanding and its disappearance was correct.

“It has been a great pleasure to meet so many friends of my son-in-law,” said the mayor with satisfied pomposity. Ward again glanced at Shotterly, and in the corners of a slight but triumphant smile saw proof that his wild supposition as to Shotterly’s plan was also correct. The millionaire smiled so suddenly and with such admiring amusement that Shotterly felt an uncomfortable sense as of having let slip something.

Nine o’clock, at the apartments of the Shotterlys, was fixed for Malrose and Ward to meet, and thus it was that, on the next evening, as Hartford was at the Diurnal building, the millionaire was ringing the bell of the Shotterly home. There came the answering click, click which marked the unlocking of the door by the touch of a button far above; and Ward pushed the door open and mounted the stairs to Shot-

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terly's floor, the fourth. He gave his card to the trim little maid that met him, and the maid bore it to Mrs. Shotterly, with the message that the gentleman wished to see Mr. Malrose.

Ward was shown into the library, and Mrs. Shotterly swept into the room to meet him. "Mr. Malrose has not come yet, but I am sure he will be here in a very few minutes, for he is expecting to meet you," she said.

They sat down in a long room, lit by candles and by a yellow-shaded lamp that glowed softly in a corner. It was an unusual room, and Ward saw at once that it showed a considerable degree of taste. There were a few engravings, two or three original drawings by newspaper artists, a well-chosen rug, and a table and chairs of a good style. Though the Shotterlys called the room the library, there were not over half a dozen books to be seen. The room, though rather bare, was in a certain way attractive, and soon Ward began to think that no room could be altogether unattractive in which was a woman like this. At first he had looked at her carelessly, had spoken perfunctorily; then suddenly it came to him that this was an unusual type; and a new type, whether man or woman, always piqued his curiosity. A woman full-formed, with rich lips, with soft complexion, with great deep eyes. A woman

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of eyes and lips!—that was what she seemed to him. And under the candle-light, which both of them well knew to be the most effective of all lights, the eyes and the lips took on a remarkable charm. He found himself wondering whether, in a different light, the charm would still remain, and he thought it would.

There was a certain bravery, a certain daring (he did not like to call it boldness) in her look—a daring that was innocent enough, indeed, but which was inquiring, curious, unrestful. Ward knew that for some women it is dangerous to be unrestful and curious. Keen-eyed as he was, he saw, too, that there were in this woman possibilities of deep discontent, of dissatisfaction, of envy.

In regard to Ward himself Mrs. Shotterly was indeed curious. She had thought much about him that day—ever since, in fact, she had been told that he was to call. She had read of him and of his career of sudden success in New York speculation after coming from somewhere out of the Northwest. Why had not her husband been as successful as he? Could she not so study this millionaire as to learn some lesson of importance—some lesson that, imparted to John, would enable him to win financially? Twenty-four hours before she would have deemed the very possibility absurd. John suc-

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cessful! Why, she had known even when he had so buoyantly left newspaper work to enter Wall Street as junior member of a lightly financed firm of brokers that he would fail. Never for a moment had she entered into his brave hopes of money-winning.

But to-night she considered the possibilities of her husband from a new view-point. Shotterly had told her of the Malrose dinner, and his jubilantly comical account of what he had done had aroused her admiration. The story had appealed to her. She had entered gleefully into every detail of it. She had felt the possibility of a new, or renewed, feeling toward him. "Oh, when you can handle people so cleverly, why won't you do it in some way that will get you on in the world!" she had cried in a sort of despair.

Though unable to throw aside a basic disbelief in her husband's ability to amass wealth, she felt that his unlooked-for display of genius might augur the development of a new future. So she had decided, having a sense of fair play, that his brilliancy had won a new chance. She knew that he was still infatuated with her in spite of her coolness, her indifference. There was no other man for whom she cared. It would, too, be a poor time to try to interest her father anew against Shotterly, for the mayor

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had been deeply impressed by the dinner, and she knew that he would keenly resent any effort to convince him that he had been deceived, and would be angered by having the memory of a delightful evening spoiled.

And now, as a tangible result of that dinner, here was the famous millionaire Ward, actually a guest, sitting in their library. What could she learn from him? He was no older than John—surely he was no cleverer—wherein, then, lay the secret of his success? And Ward felt flattered by the interest which he saw that she felt in him—an interest which his subtile sense did not fathom to its base.

They talked a little about the weather, and Ward found himself thinking that this woman's voice was pleasant to hear even on a commonplace subject. Then she brought out a portfolio of pictures of the Paris Salon. "Would you care to glance at these? Mr. Shotterly brought them home only yesterday."

Mr. Ward was very pleased to look at them. He saw, by slight but unmistakable signs, that if Shotterly had but just brought them home he had certainly picked them up at second-hand, and he also noticed that the pictures were of the salon of a year before; but he only marked this mentally as another point in regard to this interesting woman's makeup. She spoke with

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especial enthusiasm of two of the best American pictures in the collection, and of the artists who had painted them. "Both of them are great friends of Mr. Shotterly."

"Indeed! How charming to be so close in touch with the masters in art," said Ward, with apparently grave sincerity; but a quick gleam of doubt in her eyes warned him that this was not a woman who could be ridiculed without detection.

To study him to advantage, she decided that she must first so please him as to make him ready to be frank and open. She must first be as charming as possible, and then turn the conversation into practical channels. Soon she began to realize, with an amused irritation, that it was he who was controlling the direction of the talk and that it was he who displayed charm; she could only hope that she was charming in return.

He leaned back in his chair and after a little began to speak of her native city. In a few moments he had gathered several points that would be of value in talking business matters with the mayor later.

For the sake of an experiment, and for visible proof of conjectures which he had been forming, he turned the talk to the dinner of the night before, and he saw that Mrs. Shot-

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terly, for all her ease of manner, was watching him with suddenly sharpened keenness, and then he spoke of Shotterly himself, and managed, with the utmost naturalness, to praise him warmly and almost as if the words came without intention. He saw a flash of pleasure; but he saw, too, that with it there was an astonished incredulity. Clearly, she was not overproud of her own husband.

An interesting woman, this. There were dash and verve, and at the same time an impalpable languorousness. There were certain possibilities of impressibility, yet he saw that she was not plastic. There was a certain liquescent quality in those strange eyes, and yet they shone straightforwardly.

That she admired him as success personified, and that she was interested in him, he saw clearly; and, idly deciding that he should like this curious woman to think well of him personally as well as of his success, he at length began to talk about himself.

He was not in the habit of doing this. It was, indeed, what he most rarely did. He saw at once that she felt a thrill of interest, and that she was keenly alert to every word. Impelled thus, he displayed much of his real character, of his ends, his means, the quality and kind of his successes. Every now and then she

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smiled, and he knew that he distinctly liked that smile. He talked easily, freely, without ostentation, with apparent modesty; but he let this shrewd woman see what manner of man he really was—bold, unscrupulous, ready, resourceful; and she listened, absorbed and breathless, and with a strange glister in her eyes. He let her see, too, how fiercely ambitious he was.

“I have been called hard and unscrupulous,” said he, meditatively, after one of the pauses. “Perhaps I am; but I do not think I was naturally so.”

She smiled into his eyes frankly. “Shall I say what I think—that you do not strike me as being hard?”

He laughed lightly; noticing, too, that she did not say he was not unscrupulous. “At least,” he went on, “I have often thought that I was not hard naturally; and it has sometimes come to me that I can tell the very moment, the very incident, that transformed me.”

She did not ask a question nor put into words her desire that he continue, but in her face he easily read the keen desire and the question unexpressed.

“I was a boy of fourteen. We were poor, miserably poor. My father had died, and there

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were my mother, my two sisters, and myself, and we lived on a mortgaged farm.

"I don't know just why I am telling you this. I have never spoken of it to any one. But once in a while, as I sit at a table with rich food and wine before me, there comes to me the memory of the bare farmhouse, the cold rooms, the stinted meals. At the dinner, last night, that feeling came. A glass was half-way to my lips, on every side there was nothing but gaiety and happiness, when suddenly I was in a cold room, before a bare table—a little corn bread, some thick molasses—" He made a gesture as if he would thrust the memory away. "My mother was hungry-eyed, my sisters were hungry-eyed; I, too, was hungry. We seldom ate a dinner that we could sell. There was always a payment to be made for interest or taxes, or something to be bought that inexorably demanded the little money we could scrape together. It seemed, too, as if the wind-storms took off a roof or damaged some crop more often than for our neighbors, and that the lightning liked to pick out one of our cows under a tree, or else a shed or barn. Everything seemed leagued against us."

His face was dark and stern. He was almost forgetting her—at least so thought Mrs. Shotterly, for she could not fully read the

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riddle of his eyes. There were, in fact, two men before her—one, the Ward who was in a fierce heat of anger at the very recollection of long-past hardships; the other, the Ward who had coolly, even if carelessly, begun to watch and study her, and who was feeling a keenly growing interest in the task.

“One morning (how distinctly I remember it!) my younger sister was listless, and complained of feeling far from well. She was really sick, but none of us suspected it, and the expense of doctors' calls had made stoics of us all. She came in to breakfast just as I was starting off for the nearest town to sell some eggs. I know that each of us had longed to eat at least one egg—it seems little enough, doesn't it?—but not one of us had spoken of it. We were trained in self-denial. I had collected exactly three dozen and two, and I remember saying to my mother: ‘Do keep these two eggs; eat one yourself and divide the other between the girls. Now, do!’ But she said gravely: ‘No, Stuart. We can't afford it. Every cent must go for the taxes.’”

Ward gave a short laugh, bitter and with a tang of danger in it.

“Well, just as I was starting away, my little sister looked at me, and, with a sort of catch

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in her voice, she said: 'Oh, Stuart, can't you leave me just one egg? Mother, mother, I feel so tired, and I'd so like an egg.'"

Ward's voice grew harder. "Don't blame her, Mrs. Shotterly. She was only ten years old, and hadn't learned to be entirely patient. . . . When I got home I found her sick in bed."

Mrs. Shotterly was leaning forward, absorbed. "Oh!" she whispered. There was a frightened look in her eyes. She had not imagined that a man could be in such a mood as this.

"But that wasn't what I wanted to tell you," went on Ward in a dry voice, a voice of inexorability. "It was this. I got to the store and found, as I had feared I should, the proprietor himself in charge, a man named Mifflin. He was a hard and silent man; cruel, if the stories of him could be trusted; and because of his unpopularity was not making a success of the store. It was not long afterward, in fact, that he gave it up and went back to farming. Perhaps his ill success at the business may have made him more grasping, and perhaps I should allow something for that. But I can't. I have always looked on him as a cold-hearted, cruel man.

"It may seem a little thing, Mrs. Shotterly,

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but it is a thing that I firmly believe altered my character and lastingly affected my views of the world and of mankind. That man took the three dozen and two eggs at the lowest price, and would not allow me for the two. "You must throw those in, my boy," he said. And I said, frightened and bitter, fearful of losing the two eggs and the money that they ought to represent: "If you don't want to buy them give them back and I'll take them home." But he only said: "If you don't throw those two in I won't buy any."

"Well, I gave in to him. His was the only store in the town. And I went home, ungrinned, angry, fierce in my boyish way, with the lowest possible price for the thirty-six and the 'two' having lost two. And ever since that day home the pleading face of my little sister was before me."

There was a long silence. Mrs. Stoufferly did not speak. In his face she saw an implacability that frightened her. At length she said: "And did—" Then she stopped abruptly.

He was looking straight into her eyes. "No; my sister did not die. The mortgage overwhelmed us, though, before long, and we somehow managed to get away to another part of the country."

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"And the man," she began hesitatingly. "Oh, how you must have hated him!"

"I have seen him quite recently. He is now in this city. I have even had dealings with him. He did not know me, of course."

Then he added, in a matter-of-fact tone that was in strange contrast with the fierce glow that shone in the depths of his eyes: "I shall have the chance, within a few days, to ruin that man absolutely."

She dared ask no question; she uttered no word of comment; but what a position it was, she thought, to be in the power of this man so fiercely dominated by passion!

Gradually, after this, and at first with halting tentativeness, for each had been deeply moved, they began to talk freely again. By the warmth of her interest in all that he said, by the frankness of her comments and her questions, she had shown him much of her own mentality. Each felt that the other had suddenly become a closely known friend. They fell silent finally, but neither of them noticed it. Then suddenly their eyes met, and a thrill shook each, for it was one of those magnetic mutual glances that come but rarely. As his eyes met hers he saw far down into her soul, and he saw there unrest, indeed, but purity. But though her eyes were to him as windows of the heart, she saw

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nothing in his but a gleam that baffled while it thrilled her.

The bell rang, and Malrose and Shotterly appeared. "Awfully sorry to be late; you must really pardon me," said the mayor in his most orotund voice.

CHAPTER V

AN ASSIGNMENT FOR HARTFORD

HARTFORD began again the next day a round of applications at publishing houses and newspaper offices. Nowhere was there the faintest encouragement offered him. The opportunity to show what he could do was not within his grasp. Day by day he grew more discouraged, for day by day his little stock of money grew smaller, and yet no ray of hopefulness shone upon him. But as his money grew less his doggedness grew stronger. He might be forced to take up some other class of work, but it must be in some other city. He used almost to envy the motor-men, the machinists, the very laborers on the street. He would wait, so he decided, till his money should be down to twenty dollars. With that he would buy a ticket for somewhere in the West, and, with the few dollars left after getting the ticket, would begin life in some new way, no matter how humble.

Till that twenty-dollar point should be reached, however, he would still struggle.

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There was Elinor Wharton up there in the Westchester country: the thought of her gave him new energy, new determination. To think of the sound of her voice was as if a miser heard the sound of gold; to think of the sparkle of her eyes was as if a hoarder of gems pictured to himself the gleam of diamonds. A lover of such gems he was; the possessor of such gold he fain would be; and therefore he must now win his battle if victory were humanly possible. The chance—the opportunity—how he longed for it! And how, day after day, it eluded him! And through it all he was upheld by his grim conviction that it was for writing of some sort that he had especial faculties for success.

At his little hall bedroom in his West Eleventh Street boarding-house he wrote sketches and short stories when not out upon his errands of application, or on dismal night rounds along Broadway and Newspaper Row, or on sorrowful walks up Fifth Avenue and into Central Park. A few of his stories and sketches came back promptly. The others, in accordance with a practice of most editors, which has worked heartburning and injury to many a writer, were not even reported upon for many weeks.

He tried the most pertinaciously with the newspapers, for he soon saw that it was with them that his best chance lay. But he found

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that the men in whose hands his fate was held were practically unapproachable. He could not see why city editors were not anxious, or at least willing, to see applicants, for surely a personal interview would, in many a case, show them clearly whether or not the applicant were of the kind wanted. He did not know that the New York editors are so overwhelmed with applications that they feel able to fill an entire staff, if necessary, at a day's notice.

Time after time Hartford would be met at a city room door by a lad who would offer him a blank with the word "Name" printed at the top, and with the words "Nature of Business" immediately below. Hartford would thereupon write his name, and add that he was looking for a place as reporter. At other times he would send in his own card with a few penciled words. Sometimes he wrote that he should be pleased if he could speak with the editor personally. But all was in vain. The message would come back that "there is no vacancy on the staff at present." Formally written applications mailed to city editors, and urging that he felt no doubt of his own ability were he given any kind of a chance, were not even answered.

Three weeks after his first attempt at the Diurnal office he tried there again, and his message was taken by the boy who had met him

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before. The lad looked at him as if he remembered him. At any rate, he so presented the application as to obtain from Severn, the city editor of the morning edition, the brief words, "Send him in."

As Hartford approached, he heard Severn, his shovel-face cold and stern, scathingly censure, for some failure, a reporter who had just stepped up to his desk.

"But," began the reporter, "there were reasons why——"

"It is results, sir, and not reasons, that I care for," was the cutting reply, and the reporter said no more. Then Severn called out sharply:

"Mr. Streets, are you under the impression that the Diurnal is a weekly and that you can hand in copy any time before Saturday night?"

"I'll have my copy ready in a couple of minutes," replied Streets.

"There's a train leaves the Grand Central in half an hour that you must catch for that Dobbs Ferry assignment." Then he turned his long, square-sided face toward Hartford. "Well, Mr. Hartford?" And there was such absolute coldness in his look, in his tone; there was such indifference to Hartford as a human being; that it was more disconcerting than any

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savageness of temper could have been. Hartford stated his case plainly, indeed, but with that cold face upon him he was dry and unimpressive. Severn impatiently cut him short. "There is no vacancy on the staff."

"Shall I leave my name and address?" Hartford was too desperate to neglect even the slightest chance, although he hated the man for what he deemed his inhuman coldness.

Severn half turned back toward him. "Yes, if you care to—give it to the boy at the door—" And before the humiliated Hartford could leave the desk the editor was deep in conversation with some one else.

Hartford went away from the office feeling more downhearted than ever before in his life. He was bitterly self-humiliated. He hated that cold-blooded editor. He slowly walked to his boarding-house, seeing little on the way. Anxiety and the cutting nature of this last disappointment had made him almost sick. Then a picture came to him of that valley among the Croton hills, and of a shyly beautiful girl looking out over it. His heart burned with the love of her. There must be a great lake now between her home and where his own had been. How strange it all seemed! A great gulf fixed between. And then there came to him the picture of old Mammy Blackhammer standing

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there in that valley exclaiming, "Many waters cannot quench love!"

"Then neither shall floods of discouragement drown it!" He uttered the words half aloud and in an exaltation of hope. "I must win in this struggle, for I must win Elinor!"

He went out into the streets with a new hope, a new courage, in his heart. He rambled back and forth among the twisting streets of old Greenwich Village, as that part of New York is still known. He somehow felt, as he had never felt before, that he was really a New Yorker, and that he must learn all he could of the great, busy, rushing city. He looked, with a new spirit, at the old-fashioned Greenwich homes, at the ancient portals, and he thought of the old, old times, and all as if he were now a veritable New Yorker, and no longer a stranger on the point of leaving in disappointment. He noticed the difference in himself, and was amused by his own self-confident elation. When he came to the apparently impossible junction of Fourth and Eleventh Streets he smiled as would any old citizen of the city.

After a little he went down-town again and looked at the newspaper buildings with their myriad windows ablaze with light, and he watched the eager reporters hurrying out or in, and the groups standing at the entrances. He

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did not go in anywhere to apply. Sufficient new courage had indeed come to him, but he knew that editors are busiest at night. And, too, he had been to several offices that very day. But the next afternoon he would try his fate anew. He would not give way.

And so, the next day, he was again on Newspaper Row. He thought he would make a new and determined effort with the Globe. He liked the Diurnal; there was something fascinating in its way of doing things, even though he was well alive to certain faults; but after his interview with that cold-blooded editor he had no thought of trying again.

He walked back and forth along the Row several times. A group, he noticed, stood in front of the Diurnal building. As he passed he could not avoid overhearing that they were talking freely of what they termed "the latest shake-up on the Diurnal." He paused, for several others had done so, and there was no eavesdropping, for the men were speaking in tones that permitted any one to hear.

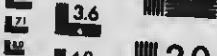
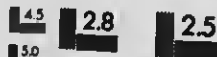
"Shake-ups," he gathered, were no new thing on the Diurnal, but this seemed to have been even more drastic than was customary. Nine men had been dropped in a bunch that very day.

"Severn just stood up in the corner and



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threw the ax," said one. "He's wild. There were six beats on him this morning." Hartford somehow divined that a "beat" is suffered when a paper misses getting news and a rival paper secures and publishes it.

"And Shotterly's one that's dropped."

"No! You don't mean it!"

"Yes. I didn't think Severn would ever let him go so long as he was willing to stay. He's too good a man to lose."

"Shotterly and Knightson were the two stars," said another. "Now Knightson will shine alone."

"Severn hates Shotterly—always has."

The name Shotterly struck Hartford's attention. Surely it could not be possible that this was the brilliant man who had sat at the head of the table a few weeks ago! He dismissed the idea at once as absurd. Suddenly one of the men cried out:

"Here comes Shotterly himself! Hallo, old man! What was the row about, anyhow?"

Shotterly pushed his way to the center of the group. Yes; it was the gay Shotterly of the Mayor Malrose dinner!

"What was it for, Shotterly? Of course, it won't hurt you any, for you can get on somewhere else easily enough——"

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"I'm on the Globe already," said Shotterly with a broad smile.

"Good! And now tell us what was the matter."

Shotterly laughed. "It was just because I did some work for the Diurnal that they didn't think could be done," he said.

"Oh, come now! There were half a dozen beats that Severn was wild about. Which one was yours?"

"None," snapped Shotterly. "If I fall down on a story I'll say so; but this time the trouble was because I got a story they didn't think I could get."

The men drew closer together. A number of other reporters, mostly from other papers, had joined the party, and the talk went on in careless openness. Hartford was fascinated at being almost in touch with so many newspaper men.

"Tell us about it!" was the general demand.

Shotterly laughed again. "All right. It was just this way. It was about that meeting last night of the Executive Committee of the new People's Union. I was sent to cover it. The office didn't expect me to get in, for the committee had let it be known that only reporters from the Sky and a few others of those

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sleepy papers, like the Stick and the Curule, could be present. They were especially violent against the Diurnal. Afraid we'd attack or ridicule the movement. The office knew all about it, but didn't let me know—just sent me off as if I'd get in as a matter of course. Well, as they knew, or thought they knew, that I'd be barred out, they had a story written up by one of their fancy-desk men. And, of course, he didn't know what he was writing about—you know the way——”

“Yes, we know.” And there was a general laugh.

“Well, this fancy-desk story told how the new organization was working in secret and against the public interests, and a lot of fool stuff like that. And an editorial writer, who doesn't know his head from his heels, wrote about how the representatives of the people—including all Diurnal men—were excluded from the meeting. And while those desk fools were gassing away, wearing out the bottoms of their chairs and practising an easy way of earning money, I was off at work. You see, I had to be there, or the Diurnal couldn't claim it had tried. But keep me out! I'd like to have seen them. The committee tried hard enough, but I bluffed them and let them know I wouldn't stand for it, and they weakened. I got a full

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report, and at a quarter of twelve I got to the office with it."

Shotterly stopped, and, in spite of his anger, laughed again. "All that pretty stuff set up and ready for the first edition! I tell you there was a scene. Severn turned purple. He rushed into the managing editor's room and in half a minute I was called in there. Didn't I know better than to get a story when it was against the policy of the paper? And why hadn't I let them know about it earlier? I almost resigned on the spot, but I didn't. I told them I wanted credit instead of blame, and that it ought to be a good deal of credit, too. I know that the managing editor jumped all over Severn; and this noon, when I got to the office, I found a blue envelope waiting for me, and caught Severn's grin as he slyly watched me take it from my box. I'm only sorry that so many others were dropped too, just because Severn was sore through me. Bad time for most of them to get on other papers. Come over to the café with me, boys; it's my treat. Here, Jenkins, lend me a fiver till pay-day, will you? Thanks."

For a moment Hartford looked after the group with eager interest. Then he turned, walked swiftly to the elevator, and got off at the city room floor. "Hit from where your

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arm is!" That was the thought that came to him. He knew it as the advice of a successful pugilist. He wrote his name on the slip that the boy handed him at the door. The boy half-smiled at him, as if in recognition. "Should like a position as reporter," he boldly wrote below his name. In a few moments the boy came back. "Go in to his desk," he said, with a semi-nod of evident good-will.

Severn looked at him sharply. "Oh, it's you! I thought I saw you yesterday." The tone was irascible. Hartford involuntarily squared his shoulders and his voice was sharp in return. "Yes, you did see me yesterday. But you didn't say there would be no chance to-day."

He was cool. He felt quite ready to hold his own, and the cold eyes of the editor saw that he did.

"You want to take a try at general work?"

"Yes."

The editor saw that Hartford was good-looking, that he wore good clothes, that he had good address, and that there was a certain grim look about his eyes that promised success. And he needed men.

"All right. I'll give you a trial. Go up and see Father Tennent. See if the report is true that he's going to take part in this People's

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Union movement. Get at him. Make him talk."

He spoke quickly, incisively. Then, turning to another man, who was standing ready to report, he seemed so completely to forget the very existence of Hartford that, almost stunned by his good fortune, the young man could only bow toward the side of his head and walk away.

Hartford had been reading the papers closely, with the idea of being as well prepared as possible should good luck come, and he knew of Father Tennent as a popular priest who frequently interested himself in public movements. The free talk of Shotterly to the group of newspaper men had given Hartford full warning of the importance of the new movement in the minds of the managers of the Diurnal. He learned, from the directory, the location of the church of which Father Tennent was the principal priest. He took the Elevated, and in half an hour was there.

He walked into the church, for, as a business block was close against either side of the structure, he could see no parish house. There were several men in the vestibule. "Where is the parish house?" he asked.

"Just around the corner, fronting on the other street," was the reply.

Thither the new reporter went; and as he

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was about to mount the steps he turned, for footsteps were close behind him—and there was Shotterly!

Hartford smiled with real pleasure and held out his hand. "How are you?" he said.

Shotterly grasped his hand, and then a look of recognition came into his face. "The son of the senator! Well, this is a good one! I'm awfully glad to see you."

Hartford was effervescing with the happiness that had come after such weary waiting. They shook hands heartily. "Not a newspaper man?" said Shotterly. "I didn't know that!"

"Not till this afternoon," answered Hartford happily.

"Then you must be after the same thing I'm after myself," said Shotterly.

"If it's Father Tennent, that's it," said Hartford.

"And what paper?"

"The Diurnal," said Hartford with a queer smile.

"Oh, yes, of course!" Shotterly smiled back. "Was on the Diurnal myself. Well, I'm on the Globe now. Got on in five minutes after I left the other."

It gave Hartford a realization of the swiftness of newspaper life. He was to learn, in time, that New York newspapers are divided

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into two classes: those that keep men for life and those that give not a moment's assurance against change.

"We're both going to be disappointed on this assignment," said Shotterly. "Tennent won't talk. The afternoon papers have tried him, and he won't say a word; won't say whether he'll be a People's Union man or not."

They went up the steps together and a sour-faced man answered the ring. "Father Tennent is not at home. I don't know when he will be in." The man's voice sounded like the harsh clicking of a heavy lock. He had opened the door but a few inches, and now he suggestively closed it a little. Shotterly laughed as he took Hartford's arm and went back down the steps.

"Tennent won't talk. I've been after him too often not to know the signs. When he wants to see reporters that vinegary man of his grins as if he has neuralgia. I'm going back to the office. Going along?"

"No-o," said Hartford hesitatingly. "I think I'll wait a while."

"Do the Micawber act? Well, all right. It'll be lost time, though. I'd wait with you, but I've got to make some money these days and must get an assignment that'll help my space-string. So long!"

"Good-by." Hartford felt a trifle chilled.

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"And, I say, Senator, meet me at Siple's this evening at six, will you? We'll get something to eat together."

Hartford's chill disappeared. He was suddenly warm with happiness.

"I'll be glad to," he said.

"If I can't be there I'll leave a note for you," said Shotterly, "and you do the same for me. Perhaps you haven't been in the work long enough to know the uncertainty of it."

"This is my very first assignment."

"Really? How odd that we should meet on it!"

"The other time we dined was at seven," said Hartford.

Shotterly laughed. Then after parting from Hartford at the corner he turned back to say: "And by the way, I happen to know you're on a ticklish assignment for a new man on the Diurnal. I don't want to make you worry about it, Senator, but it's an uncertain chance. And if anything happens, I want you to look me up at once at the Globe office and I'll give you a mighty good introduction to the city editor there."

Hartford felt a queer choking in his throat. This kindness coming on top of a little success, and after so much bitterness, deeply touched him. He tried to turn it off with a joke. "In-

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roduce me as a diner-out with millionaires, mayors, and men of the world!" he said.

Shotterly chuckled. "Well, come to me and we'll see. Good-by, Senator, and good luck."

When he left, Hartford slowly reentered the church. An idea had come to him from a glimpse that he had had into the body of the building from the vestibule. He wondered if his supposition were correct. He wondered whether, if it were correct, he could carry out the wild idea that had come to him. Then he remembered Severn's words: "Get at him. Make him talk."

CHAPTER VI

A SECRET OF FATHER TENNENT'S CONFESSIONAL

HARTFORD passed through the vestibule without speaking to any one and went on into the church. Here and there was the dim glow of a candle, and the sunshine came in soft and subdued through clearstory windows. In a few of the pews were bowed shadows praying. Great pillars, themselves like long-gowned priests, stood along either side, and beside them were alcoved shrines. In the gallery of the great church the organ was playing very very softly, and the notes came as from afar off, from some immeasurable distance, echoing vaguely.

At the farther side of the church two or three more men entered, and they glided forward, like shadows, to where a dim and indistinguishable group was gathered. To a bowed old verger, who stood like a brooding ghost, Hartford whispered: "Where does Father Tennent hear confession?" And the ancient verger, ghost-like, pointed in silence.

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Hartford went where he pointed, and joined the group of dusky shadows, and found it to be more of a line than a group, for those who were there were going into the confessional in turn. It was one of the few appointed hours during the week in which Father Tennent himself heard confession, for so busy a man was he that much of the work of the church was necessarily left to assistants.

Hartford stood, silently waiting, and one by one figures glided silently within the curtained recess, and one by one they glided out again and disappeared. Half a dozen were ahead of him when he joined the line, and as the number lessened and the time approached when he himself must enter, and he saw others come into the dim half-light to wait behind him, he felt a growing nervousness.

The last one before him was a bent old man, who whispered to himself ceaselessly but without making a sound, and who counted over and over again, with shaking anxiety, his string of beads.

This alone well-nigh upset Hartford's composure, and he was almost on the point of giving up his attempt and retreating to the street. After all, Shotterly had promised to help if the Diurnal should discharge him; and, too, if he should fail he would be only like the reporters

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for the other papers. But he grimly forced back such thoughts and held his ground.

The bent shadow crept out and away, and Hartford's time had come. Into the curtained confessional he stepped, and as the hanging fell behind him he had a sensation as of half-suffocation, like one who plunges headlong into water. It was darker in the confessional than outside, and he stumbled and almost fell. He then moved more cautiously. His feet came against something raised above the floor level, and he got down upon it clumsily on his knees. He felt a breath against his ear; it tickled, and he thought that the invisible priest had leaned forward to see what he was doing and if he had hurt himself. The air was a trifle stuffy.

Hartford breathed anxiously for a moment. As he hesitated, not knowing how best to begin, there came close beside him, through a little opening, the words, in a tone of austere kindness: "My son, you have many sins to confess?"

"No, Father—" Then he paused.

"What's that?" The kindness had disappeared and the austerity had increased.

"No, Father," Hartford began again; and then it all came out in a whispered rush: "I am a reporter for the Diurnal, and we want to

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know if the rumor is true that you are going to take an active part in the People's Union movement."

For a moment there was a dead silence. Then there was a slight sound on the priest's side of the confessional. Was it possible that it could be a repressed chuckle? Surely not; but Hartford waited in hope, for he knew that Father Tennent was looked upon as a friend of newspaper men and was popular with them. Still, the silence continued. It was for only a few moments, but to Hartford each moment seemed endlessly dragged out. Did it mean that Father Tennent was treating him with silent contempt, and was waiting for him to leave? Had he not better go away at once and avoid the possibility of having a verger sent to lead him off ignominiously? Only his grim determination made him stay.

In a few moments came the murmured question: "You are not one of our faith?"

"No, Father."

"Of course not. I was sure of it. Who was it sent you here to interview me in this way? Was it Severn?"

"It was no one. It was altogether my own idea." Hartford was feeling confident again. "The idea occurred to me, and I came in."

"I did not get your name."

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“ Marshall Hartford.”

“ Have you been on the Diurnal long?”

“ This is my very first New York assignment.”

“ Well, Mr. Hartford, I like newspaper men to be enterprising.” Again came the sound that was so much like a chuckle. “ Only don’t try this kind of interviewing again, for it won’t work twice. You may say that I feel strong sympathy with the new movement, that its leaders are to a considerable degree men in whom I have faith, but that there are some points in the platform as already outlined, or as already given to the public, of which I can not approve.”

“ What are some of the points to which you object?” whispered Hartford persistently.

This time the subdued chuckle was unmistakable, but Father Tennent answered briefly in regard to several of the clauses of the outlined platform.

“ I don’t know that I ought to do this; but, somehow, your being a new man on the Diurnal and in the city, and your getting to me here, make me do it. I don’t think I’ll regret it. And here’s another point. I’m not letting myself be interviewed to-day, and I’ll continue to keep aloof. If I could begin at the beginning again, I’d see all the newspaper men, of course; but, having turned down a number, I must turn

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down all—unless they reach me here. And so you'll find in the morning that you've got an exclusive."

Perhaps Father Tennent felt a subtle instinct that told him how much this young man, a stranger in the city, needed encouragement and success. Perhaps Hartford's grim earnestness, his getting into the very confessional, told the shrewd priest, good-hearted as he was, that such conduct showed some deep necessity.

Hartford slipped out and walked toward the door. The organ was still playing very softly; praying shadows were still scattered here and there among the pews; a soft-shuffling line was still waiting; the sunlight still streamed down, subdued and soft, sharing the faint illumination of the long interior with the few soft-glowing candles. But Hartford now saw nothing of all this. His mind was in a turmoil from sheer happiness. He reached the vestibule, and then suddenly pulled himself up. He had forgotten something important. Though such an inexperienced reporter, his common sense told him that in an interview one must always be sure of the identity of the man interviewed. He believed, of course, that he had been talking with Father Tennent; but was he certain? How could he know that it was not some other priest, a coadjutor of Father Tennent's, who also was inter-

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ested in local movements, and who, occupying Father Tennent's confessional, had answered in good faith?

There was nothing for it but to go back, and so he turned and went again toward the slow-shuffling men, whereupon the ghost-like verger, puzzled and displeased, stretched silently toward him a shadowy restraining hand, and then relapsed into quietude again as he noted the respect in the young man's movements and attitude.

It was a weary wait, this second time, for Hartford was anathematizing his own stupidity and regretting that he must so soon risk losing the favor of Father Tennent. Perhaps the priest would be so angered that he would recall his previous interview, and would tell Hartford that he must not quote him as saying a single word.

At length the young man's turn again came, and again he knelt beside the little opening in the partition.

"I forgot to ask you, Father—" Hartford was very nervous, and he found that his throat was suddenly dry.

The priest broke in impatiently. "What does this mean? How dare you make a mockery of the church?"

The anger braced Hartford. "Pardon me,

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it was my stupidity as a new reporter; but I did not ask whether you are Father Tennent or some other priest, and I couldn't go back and report without being certain."

"Yes, I am Father Tennent. And now," murmured the priest dryly, "is there anything else you want to ask?—any other matter that you want cleared up? For, no matter how important it may be, I must warn you not to come to me here a third time."

"I thank you, there is nothing else." And Hartford slipped quickly away, quite taking by surprise the one whose turn it next was, and who gaped stupidly at the quick-shrift penitent, till the next man behind said, with irritation: "Say, go on in. What'd you come here for?"

Out again into the light street. The hot glare of the sun and the hurrying people seemed almost unreal. The roar of the Elevated, the clang of the surface-cars, the hum and noise and bustle were poetry and music. He mounted the Elevated steps gaily, and wrote his notes out carefully as the car rumbled downtown. At Park Place he got out and walked briskly to City Hall Park and toward Newspaper Row. He remembered with what different feelings he had crossed that park but a few weeks before. It seemed as if the same people

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who thronged past him then were thronging past him now.

He lightly entered the Diurnal building; buoyantly went to the city room. The boy that he had come to know nodded and smiled, as if in congratulation. Hartford nodded back. He went to Severn's desk, and the editor looked up at him with his cold stare. But Hartford was not now to be affected by cold stares. There was a confidence in his look, and when he spoke he could not altogether keep out of his voice the note of exultation.

"Well?"

"I have seen Father Tennent, and he gave me a good talk."

"What is he going to do?"

"He favors the movement, but with some reservations." And then Hartford told the substance of what the priest had said to him. He had not yet learned the art of succinctly embodying a report in a few words, but his ideas were clear and Severn was pleased. By putting in a few questions he got all of it.

"All right, tell it to Mr. Knightson. He'll write it. Mr. Knightson!" he called. Hartford was suddenly chilled. What did it mean? He was on the point of asking, but a glance at that cold face told him that it was advisable to ask little but learn what he could. Knightson,

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a tall, good-looking, capable man, with an alert step and dreamy eyes, came forward. Hartford afterward found that he was not only a leading man on the Diurnal, but that he rivaled Shotterly for preeminence among the reporters of the entire Row. Hartford, new reporter that he was, did not understand that to give a story to another man to write was not at all uncommon, and that it was often done because the other man had special knowledge of the matter in hand. Nor did he know that to have this Tennent story given to Knightson showed the importance of it in Severn's eyes.

"No other paper will have this interview, Mr. Severn," said Hartford. The editor regarded him absently; scarcely seeing him, in fact, for his mind was busy with the problem of another "story," as each item or article of news is called. It was well that Severn did not catch what he meant, for, so far from being pleased, he would have thought that Hartford, a new man, had made some mistake and had misunderstood Father Tennent. The editor well knew that the priest was too friendly with all newspapers to give an exclusive to one of them without some very unusual reason, and he would have held up the story till another reporter could get Father Tennent to confirm it,

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and as the priest would not see reporters the whole story would have been lost.

“Mr. Knightson, this is Mr. Hartford. He will give you his report of an interview with Father Tennent.”

When, next morning, Hartford read the report in the paper, he at once recognized that he could not himself have even begun to do it justice. It was not only well written, but it was handled with a mastery of the whole situation and with a perfect knowledge of the men involved. The ideas of Father Tennent were not only given accurately, but in the form best calculated to bring them out with forcefulness.

But he did not know this as he sat that afternoon, feeling a little hurt and sore, and watched Knightson write his story. He was assigned to a desk, and he deemed it a strange and encouraging coincidence that it was the very desk at which he had sat on his first entrance into the office. He was not in the least superstitious—at least he believed he was not—but, like many others who are certain that they are not in the slightest degree affected by superstition, he was ready to be influenced by what seemed a good omen.

He began to wonder about his meeting with Shotterly. He didn't want to see him that day.

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He knew that in justice to the Diurnal he could not tell Shotterly of the interview he had succeeded in getting, and he disliked to feel that he should have to use evasions with him and explain afterward. So he was greatly relieved when one of the office boys came with a note from Shotterly saying that he had been sent up to Harlem on an assignment and should be unable to meet him at six. "So let's make it to-morrow," he wrote.

For a long time Hartford sat in the big room thinking himself forgotten. But he was content. Around him the work of the newspaper, which he more and more felt to be a monster machine, went on. The fascination of it all grew upon him.

One of the older reporters, sitting at an adjoining desk, looked at him kindly. "New man?"

"Yes," said Hartford, smiling back.

"You'll find it easy breaking in. Know the city at all?"

"A little; not very much."

"You'll learn it easy. Easiest city in the world to get around in and get used to. My name's Brierly; glad to know you."

"And mine's Hartford." The two men shook hands, and Hartford's heart warmed.

"Well, if there's anything I can help you

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with, in putting you on to the ropes, just let me know."

"Thank you, I shall," said Hartford warmly. He felt hot with joy again. How fine it would be to know all these men, he thought.

He sat for a long time there, looking at every one, watching everything. Six o'clock came, and a number of new faces appeared. One of the new men sat down at the desk next to that of Severn, and Hartford noticed that he began giving out the assignments, and that it was to him that the men who now came in reported. He was Ridge, the night city editor. He and Severn bent their heads first over a great sheet, which Hartford afterward learned was the day's schedule, and after that Severn waited for a while, glancing about almost aimlessly and with a queer relaxation of his hard, cold look.

Seven o'clock, eight o'clock, nine o'clock came, and still Hartford sat there. He began to feel uncomfortable. He thought that the night city editor did not know of his existence. In this, however, he was mistaken, for Severn, who never forgot anything, had pointed him out as a new man, but Ridge had a peculiar dread of trying men whom he did not know. There was no longer a shortage of men on the staff. Before the afternoon was half over

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Severn had filled the vacancies caused by dismissals.

The night shift of office boys was on duty. One of them walked up to Hartford. "Mr. Ridge wants to see you," he said.

Hartford stepped up to the desk. "There is an alarm from Sixth Avenue and Twenty-third Street; get up there quick and see what it is. If you need any help telephone me at once; if you can handle it yourself, all right. Remember, we want early copy."

"Early copy," thought Hartford confusedly. "And sending me up to a fire on Twenty-third Street after nine o'clock!" He took the fire badge that was handed him and hurried off.

The fire was slow and stubborn. It was in a business block on a side street and was without spectacular features. Hartford felt keen pride in passing through the fire lines. He was really beginning to have a career. He saw that the other reporters pinned their badges on the outside lapel of their coats, so that the police would know at a glance that they had a right within the lines, and so he pinned his on similarly. He was pleasantly accosted by a Curule man.

"Well, what've you got? Got the owner's names?"

He found out about the cordial freemasonry

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of the newspaper guild on such occasions—how the men help each other and exchange items. Without this helpful coworking he would have learned little about the fire, for he would have asked at haphazard and without system. As it was, he was taken frankly into the group of men with paper and pencils, who kept flitting off and coming back and comparing notes and giving each other information.

At eleven o'clock the fire was under control, and a few minutes later half of the reporters had gone. By twenty minutes past there were but two there, Hartford and the Curule man.

"Well, I'm going along, old man. Coming?" said the Curule reporter.

"I guess nothing else can happen," said Hartford, a trifle doubtfully.

"Sure, not." And the two went to the Elevated station together, and in friendly fashion rode together down-town. Hartford forgot about his fire badge and let it stay on the outside of the lapel.

He reported to Ridge. "Anything specially spectacular?"

"No. A good fire, though."

"Any rescues, danger from falling walls, panicky crowd; anything of that sort?"

"No, nothing like that; but the loss was heavy—\$45,000, they say."

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Ridge smiled. Hartford could not see why. "Write a stick," said Ridge.

Hartford did not know how much was meant by the word, but an instinct, together with Ridge's tone, told him that it must be but a small space. He quietly looked in the office dictionary and saw that a stick is "an instrument in which type are composed in words," and decided that dictionaries are not always helpful. He felt that it would be a confession of unbelievable ignorance to ask the meaning of the word; that he would be stamped as being too ignorant for such a great paper; and so he wrote on a guess. He turned out two sticks, and the copy-reader who was given his copy blue-penciled it down to the scheduled length, transposed the order in which the brief story was told, and changed half of the phraseology. He also glanced at the report of the Associated Press which Ridge had tossed over to him with the admonition to read, as "Hartford acts like a green man; may have missed something."

CHAPTER VII

IN THE GALLERY OF THE STOCK EXCHANGE

WHEN Stuart Ward appeared one afternoon on Wall Street instant attention was attracted. His recent operations were supposed to have been so large and his appearances on the Street had been so few that his unexpected coming aroused excited comment. There had been rumors, too, of striking developments that might be expected in connection with a great combination which he had formed—a combination by which a number of individual manufacturing establishments were merged into one great whole—and none had known just what his plans were in regard to it, or precisely what was the financial strength behind it. It was generally believed that prominent men were to become interested in the combination, and there was much conjecture as to what the quotations of its stock—a new factor in the market—were likely to be. There had from the first been mystery in connection with the operations of this man from the West, and an additional air of

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mystery had been cleverly thrown about the development of the new corporation.

As Ward threaded his way along the crowded sidewalk he nodded pleasantly to the few men whom he knew. A stranger could never have guessed, from the demeanor of those he greeted, that some dreaded him, that others would fain fawn upon him, and that all were deeply interested in what he was about to do. Nor could any stranger have guessed that he was watched; that he had scarcely more than entered the Street before there were eyes observant of him and of where he should go. Two of the many plain-clothes detectives who are scattered throughout the little district that is collectively known as "Wall Street" first recognized him as he stepped briskly along, and they leisurely followed, keeping him in sight. It was part of their duty to see that no harm should come to well-known speculators. The news of Ward's advent was swiftly carried to brokers' offices, and emissaries were hurried forth to watch. The Wall Street offices of the various newspapers were quickly aware of his arrival and, well knowing that it indicated news, sped forth reporters to watch and interview and learn.

Old Trinity, with its shadow darkening the Street, seemed sternly frowning; but in the

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shadow Ward walked calmly on. He passed the statued Washington, with its dignified aloofness, and turned into the office of a man whose operations were of such stupendous importance, and whose name was of such weight in the money markets of the world, that he was known as "the Colossus."

Ward did not remain with the Colossus more than twenty minutes, but before he emerged from the office there were a half dozen reporters waiting to interview him, and there were at least a dozen watchers from the offices of eager brokers. The watching was so unobtrusive, so careless in appearance, so natural, that a stranger would not have known that the men, scattered about and apart as they were, were doing more than casually waiting. And in many a broker's office anxious eyes followed the markings of the "ticker," for speculators hoped or feared as to the effect that the conference with the Colossus would have on the stock of the new combination. And while some watched and others waited, thousands of men who were busied with other matters incessantly hurried through the narrow streets of the district, thronging along the pavements as much as on the sidewalks, and moving with such alertness that even sightseers caught the spirit of haste and stepped with a new celerity. Messenger boys darted here and

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there; newsboys cried their wares; excited crowds gathered about the curbstome brokers; everywhere was a fierce and unrestful activity.

Ward had not been in the office of the Colossus for quite ten minutes when the stock of the combination rose two points, for thus quickly did the sensitive market respond to the hint of strength to come from an alliance with the colossal money king. Five minutes more and another point was scored, and the men of the afternoon papers were madly telephoning the news to their offices, and reporter reenforcements were swiftly sent down.

Eighteen minutes with the Colossus and a sudden rumor, originating none knew how, that negotiations were off, struck the stock a blow, and it tumbled to where it had stood when Ward appeared. Twenty minutes, and Ward walked calmly from the office and courteously but positively assured the reporters that there was nothing he could say; that there was nothing that was of the slightest importance to the public. The Colossus, too, when the reporters hurried inside the building and asked to see him, smilingly appeared for a moment and said that he was quite unable to give a particle of news. The fact that the conference was so quickly over and that neither of the men would talk was taken to mean that negotiations for a financial

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alliance were off, and within a few minutes the "tickers" recorded a sharp fall of four points. The stock slowly gained back all but one point, however, before the close of the Exchange.

For the next morning's paper Shotterly was sent down to cover the entire story and to get, if possible, at hidden springs of action and discover what was likely to occur on the following day, for it was thought that important operations were to ensue.

The surface story was, of course, easily obtainable, and then Shotterly talked with a number of the prominent men of the Street, but with the result of gaining only pleasant gossip. It was after four o'clock when he stepped into an office where one of the brokers was a man who had been senior partner in the short-lived firm of which Shotterly himself had been a member.

"Well, Robinson, what's the news of the Street?" said Shotterly.

Robinson smiled. "What special news are you after; or shall I think you've just run down here on a chance?"

"Oh, any news, so long as it's the big news of the day!" responded Shotterly. "And I want inside light."

"I thought so. Well, that conference be-

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tween Ward and the Colossus will make the stock boom."

"Even so short as it was?"

"Oh, that's all right! Orders are already coming in heavily and the market will open high. The Colossus is with him, and you know what that means as well as I do."

"Sort of a Midas touch?"

"Exactly."

"This combination is heavily capitalized, isn't it? No danger of a touch turning to water instead of gold, is there?"

"Well, such things have been, of course; but this time it's all right. The Colossus is with Ward and the stock will boom," said Robinson.

Shotterly looked at him attentively. "You speak with a good deal of confidence." He paused.

"Because I feel it," said Robinson. "I'm putting in money of my own, too, on the strength of it."

"You're just the man I want," said Shotterly dryly. "Tell me about it."

Robinson laughed. "What makes you think I know anything in particular?"

"That's a professional secret. Why should I tell you how a newspaper man reads faces? Out with it, now."

"I don't know that I ought to tell you; but

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of course you won't use my name, and after all I don't object to having the stock boomed, for I've gone in for it. Here's what I know, and I consider it significant. This conference was arranged for—planned—and so the shortness of it doesn't mean anything."

"I don't quite follow the reasoning," said Shotterly. "But do you mind telling me more about the fact?"

"It's this way. A man named Mifflin has been going in for speculation lately; a man who has been grinding all of his life somewhere up in the country; and now, after all these years of pinching and saving and getting a snug sum put aside, he's down here in Wall Street to put it all in the fire. You know the way."

"Yes, sort of like the measles. When a man catches it late in life, for the first time, it's apt to run its course pretty hard. I foresee the financial finish of your Mr. Mifflin."

"Of course you will make no use of his name. Well, he's been fascinated with the idea of Ward and has been trying to get in with him. How he ever managed to get close I don't understand, but he really did. Ward must have taken a fancy to him, for others who have tried hard have been unable to connect. Ward doesn't want to have anything to do with individual

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speculators; he's after a line of big things. But this Mifflin——”

“Has ‘succeeded where others have tried to save lives and failed,’ as I read on a doctor’s advertisement to-day,” said Shotterly. “Your Mr. Mifflin is interesting. Does he hypnotize?”

“Perhaps. And he’s certainly not a prepossessing chap in appearance. But he came in here this morning, excited, and told me that Ward had finally, after a great deal of hesitation, let him have some facts of importance. Ward told him that he was going to have a conference with the Colossus this afternoon. And Mifflin drew out a balance he had here and said he was going to put in every cent of his fortune in the way that Ward had pointed out. He was almost too excited to speak.”

“I know; buck fever—money fever—game’s in sight, and he’s so shaky he can’t aim straight.”

“I guess he’s aiming all right, though. Said he couldn’t tell me just what he was going to do; that it was all in confidence. And when I asked him if Ward had really given him definite advice, he said no, that Ward had refused to commit himself in precise words, but had pointed out the way and let him see how it could be followed.”

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Shotterly looked at his friend thoughtfully. "Now, I wonder just what Ward has against that man," he said; "or whether it's only a plain case of get his money."

"You newspaper men get the queerest ideas," said Robinson uneasily.

Shotterly took out his pocketbook and laid down one hundred dollars. "That isn't much in Wall Street, but it's all I have to-day," he said. "Put it in for me to-morrow, won't you? It'll cover something on margins."

"For the rise of the stock of Ward's combination, of course?"

"The other side. That stock's going to fall at least ten points to-morrow morning."

The broker gasped. "What do you mean? Do you know something about it? Tell me if you do, for I'm on the bull side heavy on this."

"I don't know a thing. If I did I'd tell you frankly. I just feel like going against Ward, that's all. Just an impression."

"But why?" persisted Robinson nervously. "There's lots of money in this, and now, with the help of the Colossus, it'll be a big thing."

"You can't tell which way a Wall Street cat will jump from the way it's looking," said Shotterly. "I think the cat's going to get over the fence."

The two men walked to the door together,

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and Robinson's forehead was puckered and he nervously rubbed his chin. "I wish I knew what to think," he began; and then exclaimed: "There goes Miffin now! Go and talk with him. Don't tell him you saw me."

"All right," said Shotterly, "and if I get anything I'll let you know."

He stepped after Miffin and soon came up with him. It was so late in the afternoon—late for that district—that there were few people on the Street. Shotterly spoke to Miffin affably, fell into step with him, asked some questions about what had happened at the Stock Exchange that afternoon, apologized for troubling him, a stranger, and ignored his sour grumness.

The two walked on together, and Shotterly, with a manner that Miffin could not long resist, spoke, as if by entire chance, of stocks and speculation, and then of the meeting of Ward and the Colossus. The heart of the older man warmed and he began to respond with hints of what he knew—of the great things that he could tell if he only wished to.

Shotterly saw that he was a man of a certain type of overweening pride—pride in his own shrewdness—and he cleverly worked on this weakness by leading the talk in directions that gave Miffin opportunities to show how

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shrewd he had been. Miffin began to respond to the lure.

"You think Ward a hard man to see—to talk with! Why, I've talked with him myself, and about his biggest plans, too!"

"Of course I've no doubt he has talked with you about important matters," returned Shotterly suavely; "but I know you can't mean that he told anybody—even you—about this conference of his with the Colossus."

Miffin smiled cunningly. "He's told me a good many things," he said.

"Well, you must be a fortunate man," said Shotterly. "Ward is a hard man to get close to, and the rest of us don't have the advantage, like you, of being old friends of his."

"Old friends! I never saw him till I went to him and wanted his advice and asked to put my money in with him."

Shotterly was surprised. "You never knew each other—no connection of any sort! That is certainly very strange," he said.

Miffin thought his tone of surprise was one of admiration. "No. But he seemed to like me, even at the first, and after a while he let me into some of his plans."

"A cat-and-mouse play," thought Shotterly; "cat and rat, rather," he mentally added, glancing down at Miffin's displeasing face. "I

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wonder what it all means, and how many others Ward has taken in with him."

Then he tried to get Miffin to talk further, but soon came to the conclusion that there was very little more, if anything, that this unprepossessing individual could tell. And then Miffin, wondering how he had come to talk so freely with this pleasant-mannered stranger, became cold and grum again, and Shotterly let him draw away with a brief word of farewell.

Shotterly went back to Robinson. "I haven't learned anything more. I don't think your Mr. Miffin knows any more. But just remember that Ward's stock will drop at least ten points in the morning." And he went away, leaving Robinson in a perturbed and anxious condition.

Shotterly went up-town to Ward's home, but was told that the millionaire had left the city and would not return till morning.

"Where has he gone?" said Shotterly. "I want to wire him about something important." But Ward, it seemed, had left no address.

The Stock Exchange opened the next day amid scenes of excitement. Members crowded the floor, and a close-gathered throng swayed about the post where centered the buying and selling of the Ward stocks. There were other gathering posts, too, where groups only less in

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number and excitement were clustered, and the air was filled with a screaming, strident clamor of sound. Even on ordinary days the vociferous yelling of the excited brokers makes a deafening tumult, but to-day the usual uproar was far outdone.

The entrance to the Exchange was crowded with anxious speculators and the gallery was packed. Shotterly and Knightson stood together looking down at the scene on the floor: at the yelling, dancing men, at the long lines of boothed telephones and those who were answering calls and sending messages, at the rows on rows of figures, constantly being changed, which marked the veering fortunes of the stocks.

"Just a gamble, nothing else," said Shotterly. "Precisely like putting your money on the turn of a card or on whether a ball will roll into a certain hole."

"On margins, yes," responded Knightson. He had to put his mouth close to Shotterly's ear to be heard. "But the men who actually own stock don't need to care for temporary fluctuations."

Near them stood Ward, looking down at the brokers. He was calm, impassive, self-possessed. Shotterly and Knightson regarded him curiously. "He's not a member, you know," said Shotterly. And then he watched

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the millionaire and saw a queer look flit over his face as he glanced for an instant at Zenas Mifflin, whose eyes were bent with fevered eagerness on the figures that marked the opening of the Ward securities.

From the first there was a fierce assault upon the stock of the combination. It was led by a broker who had purchased his membership only the day before, paying the record price of almost eighty thousand dollars for his seat.

This broker operated as a savage "bear," and others joined him, and a torrent of orders—orders to sell apparently at almost any price—caused the stock to drop. Rumors flew about the floor. Other rumors, originating outside, were madly telephoned to members, and the excitement grew more wild and fierce.

And once Shotterly saw a strange thing. He saw the broker who seemed to be making Ward a poor man look up at the gallery and catch the millionaire's eye, and he saw Ward make a sign of recognition, evidently some pre-arranged signal, in return.

Down and down tumbled the stock, and Mifflin watched, with face drawn and curiously pinched and with a whitening of his nostrils and his lips.

Then came another surprise. It was mys-

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teriously learned that a second company had really been financed by Ward, and this company, hitherto reputed unassailably strong, was suddenly made the object of attack. Soon its stock, too, began to tumble down and down.

And Miffin, as he read the figures, gave a great cry—a cry that was scarcely heard and not at all heeded, for all about him were frenzied men, who, like him, had gambled on margins.

Miffin had put half of his entire fortune into the big combination and half into Ward's other company. He had confidently counted on doubling, trebling, quadrupling his money. Failure had seemed a grotesque impossibility. And here, before his eyes, he saw his money melt and vanish. Ward looked again at him, and again Shotterly caught the look and wondered.

It was a day long remembered in Wall Street; a day of wide-spread disaster, of a fearful total of losses to those who had trusted in the lucky star of Ward. For hours the battle raged. Up and down, up and down, the stocks moved, and throughout the long struggle Ward held his place at the front of the gallery, looking at the fluctuating quotation records and the new-made member on the floor. And three times did Shotterly, closely watchful, see Ward and the operator exchange signals.

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The day's operations made a story of widespread ruin, and the public, reading it, saw again how absolutely callous to such results are the men who, to gain their own ends, force stocks up or down.

The afternoon papers, telling of the disastrous sagging of quotations, spoke of Ward as losing an immense amount of money, and, reciting his brief career in New York speculation, they pointed him out as one of the many examples of men who, successful for a time, are sure to meet their Waterloo in Wall Street.

But when the morning papers appeared, a general impression gained ground that Ward himself had not come out of the conflict a loser; he had had another conference with the Colossus—a conference of thirty-five minutes this time—and little doubt was felt but that both of the men had added materially to their fortunes.

And no one—with the exception of Ward and Shatterly—had a thought for Zenas Miffin, who had crept waveringly away, a totally ruined man.

CHAPTER VIII

RECOGNITION OF MIFFLIN

A GREAT strike was on. A host of men employed by the street railway company had quit work, and a number of lines were so crippled that few cars could be run. Only a few of the men operating them were regular employees, and the others were new and unskilled. In addition to the strikers themselves many thousands who had no connection with the strike had gathered, some from curiosity, some from sympathy, some to abet or incite disorder.

The air was seething with excitement, tense with threatened riot. Thronging crowds oscillated to and fro in the roadway; ambulatory thousands were on the sidewalks; from every window of the massed and lofty tenements, and over the edges of the roofs and from the fire-escapes, men and women and children looked down; all were restless, anxious, barely repressing their almost surcharged feelings.

At the car-barns far out on Second Avenue, at Ninety-sixth Street, was a principal storm-

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center, and Hartford, now in his third week of service as a Diurnal man, was there as one of the five from that paper who were to cover the happenings on the Second Avenue line. Knightson was in charge of the party, and he had promptly divided his force. He himself remained at the barns, and kept Hartford near him as his immediate aid, for he liked the young fellow and realized that he was both shrewd and reliable. The other reporters were to keep in touch with Knightson and inform him when anything of importance occurred. There was a drug-store at Ninety-fourth Street, where Knightson made arrangements to be called up at any time, and he engaged an alert youth to stay there, ready to go out and find him when any of his men wished to talk with him or to make a report.

The menace in the air was vocal; not always loudly so, but there was a hoarsely strumming sound, with no words, no cries distinguishable, but bodeful, ominous. At times the sounds swelled to a hoarse roar. "Sounds a good deal like the Stock Exchange on a busy day," said Knightson. Hartford was thrilled and fascinated, and unused though he was to such a scene he knew that at any moment the seething elements might bubble over beyond restraint. But in spite of the keen fascination of it all he

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did not for a moment forget or neglect his news-getting watchfulness.

The noise and the activity, the shouts, the passion, the agitation, the constant lookout for anything that would be news, at first bewildered Hartford; but when he saw how cool and capable and concentrated Knightson was, with what sureness he observed what was going on, with what instinctive certainty he picked out what needed instant attention, it came as a new revelation of newspaper judgment and training and of the practical operation of the newspaper instinct.

The drama, the comedy, the tragedy of it all, appealed to him. More and more it was like some great play.

Looking down Ninety-sixth Street he saw the lights of a passing steamer. "It's going through Hell Gate," said a newspaper man beside him—a Globe man.

"Is that really Hell Gate?" exclaimed Hartford. He might have known, too, that he was near there, for a number of saloons, with a grim bravado, had over their doors such signs as "Hell Gate Tunnel," "Hell Gate Drinks," "Hell Gate Brewed."

"Then Blackwells Island is close below here?" Hartford asked.

"Yes; just a few blocks down."

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Hartford looked out again at the broad dark stream. Half a dozen boats glided by, some fast, some slow, with lights swinging high on their masts or scattered lower down.

Suddenly a woman ran out upon the street, wringing her hands and wailing lamentably but with nervous repression. "They tell me he will be killed!" she cried.

Instantly a crowd began to gather about her, and her voice rose more pitifully loud. She stood in the center of the tracks, and her eager gesticulation, her vividness of facial expression, added to the force of her words. And ever she kept looking up and down the street, in fear of seeing what still she hoped to see.

"They say to him, 'Do not work'; but he say, my husband say, 'I must work, or my wife, where will she the bread get?' And they say, 'The crowd will kill him.' And they frighten me, and I run here, and now I wait to get him to go home with me."

The tears started from the little woman's eyes. A comely little woman she was, Hartford noticed, and he wondered whether he could not make an interesting story in regard to her. He certainly would if some scene should occur. He would keep her under his eye.

"Hartford!" It was the voice of Knightson.

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“Yes.” Hartford was ready, eager, alert.

Knightson had noticed a slight movement on the farther edges of the throng that was gathered near the barns. Watching closely, he had detected a slight flow eastward, off the avenue. The movement was barely perceptible. Hartford, in fact, could not perceive it even now; but there was little that escaped the eye of Knightson.

“Something’s doing over on First Avenue. Just get over there, will you, and see what it is?”

Hartford hurried to First Avenue and turned southward for several blocks, for there he saw that a crowd was gathering. On a box, in the middle of the roadway, close to Ninety-second Street, was a man vehemently waving his arms and shouting. His body swayed, and his voice was penetrating and strident. He spoke with bitter earnestness, and the crowd was constantly augmenting. Above him an electric light, losing its usual calm, began to hiss and splutter; for seconds at a time it would altogether vanish and would then come flashing back. The man himself, swaying and shouting there, now in light and now in shadow, and the excited crowd, now with faces sharply outlined and now in semigloom, had a curious effect. And over there, that island, with its few lights

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quietly glowing, must be Blackwells that had just been so strongly in his mind. How peaceful, how picturesque it seemed, and yet what misery must be there.

“Down with capital and with all capitalists! Capitalists are your enemies!” The words were hurled out like verbal missiles, and the man’s fervid fierceness was infectious. The crowd swayed about him and a hoarse and many-throated cry went up.

Hartford hurried nearer. Something in the man’s form had intangibly puzzled him, bewildered him, and each moment, as he advanced, the undefined perplexity increased.

“Down with all men that have capital! They’ll rob you! They’ll rob you as they robbed me!—as they robbed me!” the man repeated in a scream that was almost a sob. The crowd grew wilder and roared a fierce approval.

And Hartford knew the face and knew the man. Amazed, incredulous, stunned though he was, he could feel no doubt of it. It was his uncle—it was Zenas Mifflin—this man who, without possibility of personal interest in the strike, was trying to rouse the crowd to fury.

And, intently though Hartford watched the speaker and the crowd, he was oddly aware of many things that had no relation to this that so held him. He knew that window after win-

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dow above him was lined with serried faces. He knew that the sign against which he leaned told that kindling wood and bags of coal were purchasable at the foot of the steep outside cellar stairway. He knew that the river near by shone mystically strange, and that from the clear sky a myriad of stars looked calmly down.

Ah! He drew in his breath with a deep suspiration. Actuated by springs of action understood only by those who have studied mobs, the crowd suddenly changed from a throng of listeners into a mob of men aimlessly bent on violence. Miffin had used no argument. He had only, with hammering iteration, beaten into the minds of these men that all capitalists must be overthrown; and now, all in a moment, he was down from the box and was pushed to the front of the mob, and a disorderly march was begun toward the car-barns. Hartford, keen though his personal interest was, watched with a certain cynicism and aloofness that early comes to the newspaper observer.

And then, up the street, appeared a line of galloping horsemen. Twenty—thirty—forty mounted police there were, and they swept down the roadway in a swinging gallop. The stragglers along the street gave way and dodged to cover, and upon the main body the police charged. Their faces were grim, and yet all

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had a certain impassiveness, as if the merits of the case were of absolutely no interest to them, and as if it were all just a matter of simple duty.

The street cleared before them like magic. The men scattered up flights of tenement stairs, down into cellars, through doors that were hastily opened for them, or at full speed toward the riverside.

The police, swiftly though they swept the crowd away, tried to avoid personal conflict. A few men were thrown down, and a very few were struck, and the horses were so skilfully managed as to avoid trampling on any of the crowd. The officers looked for the leader—for the man who, as the report had excitedly come to them, had gathered a mob over here, so as to have it organized and wrought up before interruption could come.

But no leader could they find. From none of the men whom they sharply interrogated could they obtain any satisfactory information. All that they could gather was that the leader was a stranger, and certainly not a railroad man.

Even Hartford himself had lost sight of Zenas Mifflin. When the mounted police had galloped into the mob there had come one of the brief periods when the big electric light

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died out, and in that moment, and amid the whirling medley, Mifflin had disappeared. And at this Hartford breathed more freely.

Now none were out in the street but the police, and again they formed into line, ready for the word of command.

A man detached himself from a group in a close-by doorway. "Hallo!" he said; and Hartford, thinking of Mifflin, made a sudden start. "What did you do that for, Senator? You look as if you had seen a ghost."

"I think I have," said Hartford, with an attempt at a natural manner.

"Well, I'm not a ghost, Senator, I assure you," said Shotterly lightly, not for a moment thinking that Hartford was really agitated except by the general excitement of the scene. "Were you here in time to hear that leader—the fellow who talked so fiercely? I missed him."

"Yes," said Hartford hesitatingly; "I heard him talk."

"The police would have had work if he hadn't been stopped when he was. If this crowd had got up into Second Avenue it would have set the whole thing off; then there would have been something big for us. Still, this wasn't at all slow. Who was the fellow; did you find out?"

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"I didn't see any one that knew," replied Hartford.

"No; I understand nobody knows him; just some anarchist, I guess," said Shotterly easily. "Still, I always like to have names in my stories. If you hear his let me know."

"All right, I shall," said Hartford, and his own grim smile made him feel better.

Returning to the principal storm-center, Hartford found Knightson eager to know all that had happened. "That ought to be good for a half-column episode, all by itself," Knightson said. "The captain of the mounted men told me about it, and of course you were over there ahead of the police. I'll go to the drug-store with you in a few minutes and we'll fix the story up and send it down to the office, with some other copy, by messenger."

"All right," said Hartford.

"I hope you got the name of the leader—made a pretty exciting thing of it, didn't he?"

"Yes, it was really exciting."

"So I hope you got his name. There may be some good story behind it. Do you know who he is?"

Hartford felt keen shame at already being disloyal to his newspaper and hiding information from it. He felt himself flush hotly. Yet how could he tell of Zenas Miffin!

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"Well?" said Knightson sharply.

"I didn't find any one that knows who the man is," said Hartford. "He seemed to be an entire stranger."

And as he walked to the drug-store with Knightson, he saw the glowering face of his uncle pass so close to him that he could have reached out and touched the man. But Mifflin did not see him, and Hartford gave no sign.

CHAPTER IX

THE PRESENCE OF ELINOR

WHEN he left the drug-store Hartford did not see the woman who had watched for the appearance of her husband. She had, in fact, been ordered away, but not harshly, by the police, because a crowd elung persistently about her. Timidly she tried to obey the command, and walked farther down the street, but still people thronged curiously around. She slowly walked to Third Avenue, and the crowd fell away from her when it was evident that she was leaving the scene of excitement.

Her courage revived when away from the police and from the throng, and her anxiety again became insistent, and after walking for a few blocks she hurried back to Second Avenue and mingled with the groups that shifted along the tracks.

Southward beneath the Elevated Railroad walked Hartford. He noticed what a strange tunnel effect the elevated structure made—a tunnel with skeleton sides of steel, topped with

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a checkered plaid-work of ties and rails; a tunnel stretching far into the distance and filled with flickering light and shifting shade. Where he stood the Elevated tracks were high above, but far away the street rose to meet the track-line. The effect was as if the surface-cars could barely squeeze beneath. And there, as he looked, a car came through the space. None had come for some time, and it was more than probable that with this first car after the stoppage there would be a story.

A train thundered over his head, and as its clattering roar died away he noticed how the sound seemed to be taken up and continued, in a different key, by another roar—the humming murmur of the multitude. It was as if his ear were at the orifice of a mighty shell, and he were listening to the roaring of an ocean.

The approaching car was very near now. Above the roar he heard the vibrant clang, and he knew from the unintermittedness of the sound that the motor-man was stamping the gong with high-strung nervousness.

Hartford heard the clangorous noise of two trains that, on either track, thundered into the Elevated station above his head, and then even that noise was drowned, and the sharp clanging of the gong was drowned, and all was drowned but the fierce howl of the mob that suddenly sur-

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rounded the car. A stone crashed through the glass, a storm of missiles followed. Bottles and pieces of wood and coal came hurtling down through the air, for, infected by the sudden passion of the crowd, watchers at tenement windows madly joined in, though most of what they threw fell short and struck among the surging men. So frantic did the people at the windows become, wrought up by being so far away, that some of them, and especially the women, hurled things without any thought of what missiles came first to their hand; and Hartford saw one woman throw two boots in swift succession, and another rush to a window with a lamp which only the vigorous opposition of her husband kept her from tossing out.

He saw that a party of three—a man, accompanied by two ladies—had been caught in the sudden storm and had retreated to a doorway on the farther side of the street. One of the women—he could not see the face of the other—was some forty years of age, well-gowned, good-looking, but clearly in a state of high indignation. She was speaking rapidly and testily to the man, Hartford noticed, and seemed to be telling him how foolish he had been to lead them there.

It was Waters—Paul Waters, the engineer—one of the party who had dined at the As-

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toria. Hartford laughed to himself, to think of that night and of all that had occurred since. He made no effort to cross the street, for he saw that Waters needed no assistance, and, unless it were to help him, he did not care to recall himself to his memory. Waters, so far as he knew, still believed that he, Hartford, was a distinguished personage, or the son of one. When he should have conquered this strange New York newspaper life and had really become a personage, it would be time to meet Waters again and to remind him of the Shotterly dinner.

Meanwhile the car had come to a sudden stop. A wedge in the slot! The mob cried out exultantly. An officer pushed through the throng and tugged at the obstruction. A stone struck the face of the policeman who was standing on the platform, but he stood impassive and wiped away the blood. But the next moment he was all action, for he leaped over the dashboard, grasped a man who was about to strike the stooping officer, and dragged his prisoner to the platform and threw him down in a heap. It was done in an instant, and the nearest rioters fell back from in front of the car, for the two policemen drew revolvers and looked steadily along the barrels. Three other policemen were fighting their way through the roaring

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mob, and Hartford knew that in a few minutes the mounted men must also come.

The car started forward, when suddenly there was a woman's scream in such a fearsome note that there fell a sort of grudging silence.

A woman—it was the little woman who had been looking for her husband—forced her way through the crowd and ran out upon the track. She looked up at the face of the motor-man.

“Jacob!” she cried. “Jacob!”

He frowned and motioned her aside, and the car moved on, and then the woman flung herself down upon the track, right in its path.

From the crowd there arose a cry of wonder, of admiration, of horror. Men plunged forward, but with a sudden jamming down of the brake the motor-man brought his car to a stop just as it touched her. He leaped down. “Lena!” he cried.

The now silent crowd fell back as he led her to one side. “It is for her that I do this work!” he exclaimed as he glared at the encircling faces.

Five policemen were now there and Jacob mounted again to the platform. Again the shouts and yells and cries broke forth and again came a storm of missiles, but with set face Jacob turned on the power and the car once more began to move ahead. Lena looked dazed, and

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blood trickled down over one cheek, for a stone had struck her. Her husband did not know this and he did not look at her. The car started forward, and then—this time without a word or cry—she rushed forward and again threw herself upon the track.

A second time there fell a silence, and hands that were poised in air with stones to throw remained aloft, and mouths that were opened to shout remained jaw-dropped and still. And then, very slowly, Jacob left the platform and went to the side of his wife.

“Come,” he said; “come, we are going home.” And his voice was cold yet not quite unkind, and the woman arose and clasped his arm in nervous silence. He barely glanced at her, but kept his eyes bent straight in front and slowly the couple began to walk away. And when the crowd saw that the motor-man had given up his task, when it was apparent that he had really deserted the car, there arose a burst of cheers. Up came a galloping company of mounted police, and they watched and listened in amazement, for there was no riotous mob; there was only a packed mass of men, boisterous in triumph.

Shouting and jostling and good-naturedly struggling, most of the crowd tried to follow the motor-man and his wife. They wanted to

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get close to them, to speak to them in congratulation, to shake their hands. The police began to realize that this suddenly changed throng needed management, after all, and deftly they began to scatter it.

But in a sudden rush, Jacob and his wife were swept almost off their feet, and the man, driven out of his course, struggled to a refuge at the foot of a tenement stair, with Lena clinging blindly to him. And no sooner had they reached the spot than Lena slipped from his arm and fell in a faint.

"Keep back!" shouted Waters, for it was right at his feet that the woman dropped. "Can't you see she's fainted!" His voice of authority made the crowd recoil, and the foremost in the throng took up his command and forced the others back to leave an open space.

Hartford tried to get to where the little drama was going on, and as he neared the spot he saw that the younger of the two women who were with Waters had stepped forward, and, impulsively wiping away the blood from Lena's cheek, was striving to bring her back to consciousness, and that the older lady looked on in a state of fluttered excitement.

The crowd was wedged so tight and so close that Hartford could get no nearer; but he was near enough to be utterly amazed, utterly as-

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tounded, for he recognized the girl. He had felt that evening as if the capacity for astonishment were reached: but now, when he saw Elinor Wharton bending over a motor-man's wife on a New York street; when he saw her whom he had supposed to be at her father's home among the Westchester hills here in the midst of a riot; when he saw her under the guardianship of Waters, who so lately had spoken of her as a stranger and as the prettiest girl he had ever beheld; he knew not what to think, he was too astounded to form any conjecture.

But stronger than the astonishment was a pang of jealousy. For the manner of Waters, so protecting, so watchful, so deeply concerned, was that of a lover; he unconsciously showed it in the poise of his body, in the expression of his face, in his air of would-be proprietorship.

And Hartford felt sick at heart. Was this to be the end of his keenest hope, his strongest ambition? There flashed into his mind the remembrance of one afternoon in early spring when he had sat beside Elinor on a stretch of greensward beside the Croton. Deep, lush grass, and a stretch of sweeping water; the play of a couple of orioles; the dim glow of a near-by beech-wood; the long cool shadows and the dazzling sun-swept breadths; and all about them the

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rich air of springtide, instinct with love—how well he remembered that day! But he had not told her of his love, thinking that he ought first to win somewhat of place in the great world. And now, with all the manner of a lover, Waters, with his good looks, his success, his rising fame, was here with Elinor.

The motor-man's wife soon revived, and Elinor and Waters assisted her to her feet. Then Waters, with Elinor on one side and the older lady on the other, stepped quickly to the stairway of the Elevated, and Jacob and Lena followed at Waters's brief direction. A mighty cheer went up as they mounted the stair, policemen held back the rush of the curious who would have followed, and then the crowd sifted into talkative disintegration. Hartford, amazed and puzzled and disturbed by jealousy though he was (a manly jealousy, which had in it nothing of malice or ill-will), realized that now indeed he had a good story for the Diurnal; that he had it vivid and clear and with fulness of detail; and he also realized that for the second time in the course of that evening he was tempted to disloyalty toward his paper. Should he use the name of Elinor? He had not admitted to Knightson that he knew the man who had addressed the mob on First Avenue, for that would have been holding his un-

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cle up to disgrace and might have resulted in arrest. Though the police were lenient toward the crowd in general, men in authority might not be willing to overlook a direct effort to arouse violence when that effort was made by one who was in no degree excusable through personal interest in the strike. So Hartford felt that he had done right in that case; but could he again withhold an important item of the news? He owed much to his connection with the Diurnal. To it was due his very continuance in New York. And he knew the feeling that comes so strongly to the newspaper man, that to his paper belong his utmost endeavors, his fullest knowledge.

The next day Severn, the city editor, greeted Hartford with a manner in which there was a trace of warmth, and Hartford was pleased, for he had been anxious to win his good opinion.

“Look on the bulletin-board,” said Brierly good-naturedly; and Hartford looked, and read there that a bonus of twenty dollars had been awarded him for good work in connection with the strike. For Knightson, seeing how deeply he was impressed by the story of the motor-man’s wife, had allowed him to write it himself; and not only was the story far better than that of any other paper—for no other had secured more than an outline—but that part referring

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to Elinor was an "exclusive." "That was well covered, Mr. Hartford," said Severn.

The story was read by Elinor and by her aunt, Mrs. Westenhouse, with whom she was visiting, with very different feelings from those of newspaper men.

"Elinor! Elinor!" cried Mrs. Westenhouse, and her voice was full of indignant amazement.

"Yes, Aunt Cornelia, I'm coming." And in a moment the girl was in the room. "Why, what is it? What has happened?" For Mrs. Westenhouse, in wrathful severity, was holding the Diurnal out at arm's length. "What is it—what is the matter—is there some bad news?"

But Mrs. Westenhouse was almost speechless. "About you—you and Mr. Waters. I'll never forgive him!"

Elinor ran to her side, took the paper and glanced hastily at the part that she pointed out. Her face showed a frightened curiosity, but when she saw that it was only an account of how Miss Elinor Wharton and another lady, with Mr. Waters, were caught in the mob, and how she helped the fainting woman—when she swiftly read it and saw how simply the story was told—the frown disappeared from her forehead, and she almost smiled. "Why, I'm sorry, of course, and surprised; but really, is it so very bad?"

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Mrs. Westenhause straightened herself bolt upright. "Bad! To have my niece under my charge, and get her name in the papers! And Mr. Waters to give your name to that—that reporter or whatever they call that kind of man!"

Elinor tried to look gravely concerned. "Of course, it is altogether too bad; but isn't there some chance that, after all, Mr. Waters didn't——"

"Do you mean to infer that I gave your name to the newspaper myself?"

"Why, no, of course not——"

"Or that you saw that—that—reporter yourself?" demanded the indignant aunt.

"Oh, no!"

"Then how can you suggest that perhaps it wasn't Mr. Waters?"

"I'm sure I can't say why; I certainly can't give any other explanation. Only I thought——"

"There was no other possible way. Let me hear no defense of Mr. Waters. I will demand of him that he explain himself. I have, as you know, been inclined to advise you to permit his atten——"

"Aunt!" pleaded Elinor, flushing.

"Well, well, my dear; but this account in the Diurnal!" She was speechless again.

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"I'm awfully sorry, of course," faltered Elinor; "but, really, don't you think it might have been put in worse——"

"Elinor," said Mrs. Westenhouse with dignity, "I consider that it is not the proper sort of journalism. The reporter, my dear, ought to have come to me and asked if there were any objection to publishing my name with that of Mr. Waters. He should not even have dreamt of putting a young girl into such publicity. He should have described the incident by saying, in a reserved and gentlemanly way, that—ahem——"

"Yes, it is really too bad," murmured Elinor.

Mrs. Westenhouse was somewhat mollified. "I'm glad to see that, after all, you have the proper feeling in the matter," she said, as she glanced again, and somewhat wistfully, at the newspaper. "Now, it is fitting that, in public, I should bear the brunt of an ordeal such as this; but that you, young and inexperienced, should remain modestly and unknown in the background. It would not read so badly that Mrs. Westenhouse——" But she suddenly checked herself as she caught a twinkle in Elinor's eye. "I must certainly call Mr. Waters to a severe account," she said.

CHAPTER X

“QUEER MEN BELOW”

A VOICE sounded up the air-shaft, clear and plain. “It’s tired nature’s hair restorer.” Mrs. Westenhouse looked at Elinor with a frown of bewilderment and annoyance. “Now, what does he—hush!”

“But you don’t really have to use it!” This, from a second voice.

“Yes; I was told that unless I got it quick and used it steady there would be nothing between the top of my head and heaven.”

“Now, what,” said Mrs. Westenhouse plaintively, “does that man mean? I’m sure that if he were using the words straight it would be something about sleep; and whatever has he to do with heaven? Oh, those men do worry me so!”

“So!” came in croaking echo from a big parrot that hung in a cage beside the air-shaft. An intelligent parrot it was, for it often helped on conversation by repeating tag-ends. “So!” it repeated.

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"But what do these men do to worry you so, Aunt Cornelia?" asked Elinor.

"What *don't* they do!" ejaculated Mrs. Westenhouse. "Haven't you heard them yourself coming home at all hours of the night? And what respectable work can there be that makes them get up at such hours as they do—nearly noon? And the noise they make! It's outrageous!"

Elinor felt abashed. She had, in truth, been amused rather than disturbed by the sounds of gay laughter and the scraps of talk and song that had come up to the Westenhouse floor from that immediately below, for she had considered it from the standpoint of a girl who, visiting in the great city, was ready to be amused or interested by many things. Suddenly, now, she realized that perhaps these men in the flat below were really not "nice." Certainly, her aunt saw reason to dislike and suspect them, and her aunt was a New Yorker and ought to know.

"It's five days now since they moved in," went on Mrs. Westenhouse, "and I am thinking seriously of complaining to the landlord. I don't understand their queer ways or their queer talk. Seems as if they use a cipher. Tired nature's hair restorer! And heaven!"

Elinor and her aunt were in the sitting-room,

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and near the window which opened into the air-shaft. "But, aunt, ought we to listen to them; oughtn't we to go away into the other room?"

"How absurd you are!" said Mrs. Westenhous, bridling with indignation. "If a man talks loud into the air-shaft it's like talking loud in a street-car or a theater seat. He knows it's not private. And we can't let ourselves be driven out of one of our own rooms just because a man on the other floor chooses to take the house into his confidence. The air-shaft is the—the news center of an apartment house."

"So!" cried the parrot, harking back to its previous triumph.

The air-shaft was a great square well, dropping sheer-walled down to the basement level from the roof. Each set of apartments had a room in the middle whose supply of air and light came solely from this air-shaft. And, as has been noted, conversation frequently came in, as well as the light and the air.

"If they don't want to be heard, let them speak low, just as we do," said Mrs. Westenhous. And at that moment up came the second voice again.

"I say, Brierly, I saw a sign yesterday, in a music-store window, of something that's just what you need. It was 'Old bows rehaired!'"

There came the sound of two voices chuck-

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ling, and Mrs. Westenhous signaled in dumb show the hopelessness of her ever understanding these strange men. There was a silence, and then a sound as of some one walking away and singing as he walked. “They’ve gone away,” said Mrs. Westenhous. But Brierly was still standing by the window rubbing the hair restorer over the threatened bald area. He smiled as he heard the voice of Mrs. Westenhous come down to him. “Oh, those queer men below!” But he didn’t hear any more than that heartfelt exclamation, for after it Mrs. Westenhous’s voice dropped again to conversational tone. Her mind reverted to her anger toward Waters. “To think that he should have told that reporter your name after having got us into the trouble by his own foolishness!” she said.

“It was very exciting, and I’m afraid that, as none of us was hurt, I really enjoyed the experience,” said Elinor with a smile.

“But I can’t forgive Mr. Waters for taking us there. I’m sure I never even heard of that part of town before,” said the aunt.

The explanation of how they had got into that quarter of the city was simple. The three had gone together to dine with the parents of Waters in Flushing. Waters had gained his first practical experience in the office of the late

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Mr. Westenhousc, civil engineer, and had then for several years been associated with him in his work. After his death he had remained a friend and adviser of the widow, and had chanced to call on the very first evening of Elinor's visit in New York. Since then he had been assiduous in his attentions, and neither Elinor herself nor Mrs. Westenhousc could fail to see the object of his sudden devotion. The invitation from his parents was not, in itself, of special import, for they and Mrs. Westenhousc had before this exchanged calls and dinners.

After the dinner at Flushing the party had trolleyed homeward, the evening being pleasant, and Waters feeling sure that Miss Wharton would enjoy the trolley ride more than a return by rail. At the junction where a branch led off to the ferry connecting with Ninety-second Street, he had urged that they leave the main line, which would have taken them to the regular Thirty-fourth Street crossing. It would be a pleasant experience, he had insisted, to see an unfamiliar section and to take the ferry just north of Blackwell's Island and past Hell Gate. They had followed his suggestion, and on landing and walking toward the Ninety-second Street Elevated station they had been caught in the mob.

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“Quite inexcusable,” said Mrs. Westenhous. And then she added, thoughtfully and with apparent inconsequence: “But he really likes you, though. There’s no doubt of it.”

“Why, Aunt Cornelia!” Elinor laughed and blushed. “You mustn’t let me think of such things. What would father say?”

“He’d say, my dear, that Mr. Waters is a man of position and achievement and with a future. Mr. Westenhous always prophesied it of him.” She nibbled thoughtfully at a crochet-needle and then added, as if to herself and absent-mindedly: “And goodness knows you are worth looking at!”

Elinor’s parents, indeed, were well established, and she had had the advantages of a good boarding-school training. Her clothes were good and she wore them well, and her bearing was easy and graceful. Hers, too, was a face of rare delicacy and charm; with nose straight and fine, mouth with the upper lip short and forming thus a bow of curving sweetness, eyes of soft-glinting hazel, clear and deep, eyebrows of delicate arch; a face straightforward, frank, and trustful—a face of proud reserve, with a wistfulness about the mouth and a winning shyness in the eyes.

And as Mrs. Westenhous spoke of Waters, Elinor herself thought of another one who cared

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for her—of a young man unlike Waters, one with fame and fortune still to win—a young man who, but a few months before, had sat beside her on the brink of the river, where there were deep rich grass and a stretch of sweeping water, the cool shadows of a beech-wood, and the chirp of fluttering birds. And now, as she pictured Marshall Hartford to herself, she remembered that she had felt strangely thrilled beside him. She liked Mr. Waters—she admired him; but ever her thoughts came back insistently to Hartford. Where was he? What was he doing? She knew that he had gone to New York; was he successful or was he struggling and unhappy? But, after all, how gallant and manly Mr. Waters was, and with what a capable, masterful air he did everything. Wasn't it foolish to keep thinking of Hartford! And thus her thoughts swung, pendulum-like, from one to the other.

“Let's go out and look at the streets and the shops for a while,” said Mrs. Westenhous, who had been quizzically observing her.

The parrot was thereupon hung out of the window, in the air-shaft, and it croaked a few times in a wise tone and cried “Oh!” at the top of its voice. “A wise parrot,” said Mrs. Westenhous as she shook her finger tenderly at it for good-by; “and you'd be surprised to

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know how much it picks up. Why, sometimes, when I am alone, it seems as if it's almost human."

After the two went away, Brierly, his round eyes twinkling, poked his head out into the air-shaft and gently tried to attract the bird's attention. "Oh!" it said, looking down at him.

"Queer men below!" he said. And the bird cocked its head and peered at him more curiously.

"Queer men below! Queer men below! Queer men below!" he repeated, slowly and distinctly.

"Below!" said the parrot with a jerk of its head. "Below!" it croaked again.

"Queer men below!" repeated Brierly. Then, for half an hour, he taught that bird its lesson; and when at length he left the rooms and went away, he was so tickled that he slammed the door behind him without remembering to pick up his bunch of keys which he had carelessly laid down. For long after his departure the parrot croaked there in the air-shaft: "Queer men below! Queer men below!" But after a while it ceased making the call, for in spite of all its twistings and leerings and creaks it could not lure back to the window below the man who had taught it this.

That evening, when Mr. Waters called and

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asked solicitously if Mrs. Westenhause or Miss Wharton were any the worse for the experiences of the night before, Mrs. Westenhause did not pounce upon him as severely as she had pictured herself doing. He was so good-looking and so evidently eager to please that she could not. She did indeed say, but with an absence of anger and with only a touch of resigned reproach:

"I was sorry, Mr. Waters, to see that the reporter for the Diurnal was allowed to have——"

"Did you read that?" he interrupted. "I saw it this morning and wondered how the paper could possibly have got it. I never was so surprised in my life."

"Oh!" cried the parrot.

"We were talking about it," said Mrs. Westenhause, "and could not see any possible explanation except that after leaving here you met some reporter that you knew."

"I!" His frank amazement was unmistakable. "No, indeed! I saw no reporter. I haven't the slightest idea how they could have learned the name of Miss Wharton."

"Of course any of them might know you," said Mrs. Westenhause. "Could it have been known that Elinor is visiting me, and could some one have— But it's too complicated and im-

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possible! How *could* any reporter have known of Elinor and known her name?"

They all laughed. "It's just as much a mystery to me as it is to you," said Waters.

"I have heard, even so far away as the Westchester country," put in Elinor demurely, "of the omniscience of modern journalism."

And then, with its head wisely cocked on one side, the parrot delivered itself of an oracular croak, followed by the words: "Queer men below!"

Mrs. Westenhous started and turned pale. "Oh, oh!" she cried.

"Queer men below!" repeated the parrot, as if in determination, and Mrs. Westenhous sank back faint and amazed. She looked helplessly at Elinor. "Isn't that just what I said about those men down-stairs?" she said.

"I remember your saying just those words," cried Elinor. "And I'm sure it wasn't more than once."

"The bird's human!" ejaculated Mrs. Westenhous.

Waters got up and walked to it and examined it curiously, as if by looking at it he might discover some piece of machinery or some mechanical contrivance that would explain the phenomenon. "It's certainly a wonder," he said.

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At that the parrot cried out: "Ha, ha! Queer men below!"

"Who are these men below?" said Waters.

"I don't know; there's certainly something queer about them, and you see the parrot himself has got the idea and is trying to tell me."

But Waters was bent on saying something of deep importance this evening, something more important to him, indeed, than anything else could possibly be; so even his interest in newspaper mysteries and human-like parrots waned, and Mrs. Westenhouse divined something of his feeling, and after a while went away to discuss with the maid some matters of household concern.

Then, left alone, he said to Elinor, and his voice thrilled her with its earnestness, and the light in her hazel eyes shone very softly:

"Miss Wharton, I wish to say something to you that I should not say after such a brief acquaintance. But I shall probably meet your father in the morning, as I shall be busy with work close by your home, and I should feel ashamed if I were to meet him without letting him know that I am paying attentions to you, and that I hope he will have no objection to my doing so. May I tell him this? For I love you, and I love you deeply."

His voice was very soft, very caressing. She

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was proud to be loved by such a man. And yet—oh, how she wished that Marshall Hartford were there. Why should such a question be forced upon her now? How could she tell which of the two she liked—whether she loved either of them—when she had known even Hartford so very, very little!

“Mr. Waters—” She was fluttered, frightened.

“I know I have no right, but I love you, I love you. That is my sole excuse.”

“Don’t ask me now. I don’t know what to say; I—I really don’t know what to say, Mr. Waters.” She was in a sweet confusion.

“Don’t say anything, then,” he said, and his voice still had that caressing sound. “If you say a simple No, then I shall be unhappy and I shall not speak to your father. But if you say nothing at all, I shall understand that you are not bound in the slightest degree; but I shall tell your father that I hope for his permission to see you often. And if I am so fortunate as to get his consent, I shall then, of course, tell your aunt at once, so that she will not have me here under any false impression.”

Elinor, in a shy tremble, glanced up at him, and he longed for the right to touch those dainty lips, he longed to see a love-light in her eyes. Then Mrs. Westenhouse came in and talked

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in a matter-of-fact way of ordinary things, and soon the composure of Elinor was quite restored.

And as they talked Waters kept thinking of a scene below Elinor's Westchester home, and of how old, old Mammy Blackhammer had said to him, down in the heart of the valley which he was to cover with a flood, that many waters cannot quench love! And he remembered that at the very moment when the words were said Elinor was standing far above him on the hillside, a vision of sweetness and charm. He was not superstitious—at least he thought he was not—but he could not but think that there was an omen, and a delightful one, connected with the utterance of such words at such a time.

Then, with an effort, he brought his attention back to the conversation of Mrs. Westenhous. "Yes, there certainly is a mighty fascination in New York for the real New Yorker. Why, only last week a friend of mine declared that every time she returned to New York after an absence she felt like kissing the stones of Madison Square. And she looked as if she meant it, too!"

Suddenly the maid appeared at the door with a frightened face. "There's a thief coming up in the dumb-waiter!" she gasped.

Waters instantly hurried to the kitchen, and

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Mrs. Westenhause and Elinor followed him, silent and alarmed. "I heard them talking—and—and one of 'em's pulling the other up," whispered the maid.

What she had heard was the talk of Brierly and a companion at the foot of the dumb-waiter shaft. She had heard the voices but had not caught the words. "It's too bad," Brierly had said, "but I forgot my keys to-day, and the janitor hasn't any for our rooms. And this is the day off for our boy. So now, if you'll just get in here——"

The other man laughed, for Brierly's voice was just like that of a conjurer who tries to cajole a hesitating man into passing up his best hat to the stage to break eggs in. "But I don't want to go up in that thing. That would be too funny a way to make my first entry into the much-vaunted apartments!"

"Not vaunted enough— I never even mentioned this elevator service. So just get right in——"

"But perhaps some one is in the rooms, after all."

"No, I know that neither Knightson nor Jenkins can possibly be there; and, besides, I've rung and rung the bell at the front and I've whistled up the speaking-tube here. So——"

"No, no. You get in yourself and I'll pull."

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Brierly laughed. "Measure that space and then measure me. The spirit is willing but the flesh is thick."

The dumb-waiter box was in two compartments. "But I can't get in there!"

Brierly swung up the divisional shelf on its hinges and hooked it. "Now there's room," he said. And into the space his companion tucked himself.

Brierly got hold of the rope. "The third floor. Count the doors as you pass; they're all lined with galvanized iron—different from the brick and mortar between. You can tell easily enough—reach out and touch."

"And if I find the dumb-waiter door locked?"

"Just break it open. But I'm sure it isn't locked."

Then came a heavy scrunch, for the dumb-waiter was not accustomed to such a heavy load. S-c-r-u-n-c-h! S-c-r-u-n-c-h! S-c-r-u-n-c-h! Each scrunch represented a long pull at the rope, and the dumb-waiter made slow progress, for it was long since Brierly had done such hard work and he was quickly out of breath.

"Better not let it drop!" went down to Brierly in a heavy whisper when he rested an unusually long time between pulls. And the whisper went up as well as down, and was heard

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by Waters just as he reached the shaft-doors. He softly closed the doors and turned back into the room.

"I guess it's really a thief," he said; "but it's so unusually bold to do such a thing at this early hour that perhaps it's all right."

"But later he wouldn't dare make any noise at all with the dumb waiter," said Mrs. Westenhous.

"That's so. Then they're after some floor where they think nobody's at home. Have you any weapon handy?"

Mrs. Westenhous made a dash for the poker and handed it to him, and the man grabbed the shovel and put that into his other hand. "Twice is he armed that hath his quarrel just," he said. "And now I'll just stand here and listen to see where he stops."

"How far are you?" came the voice of Brierly, indistinct, muffled, through the closed door.

"Second," went back in a hoarse attempt at a whisper, but so loud was it that the waiting group could hear.

"He's well above the second," muttered Waters.

S-e-r-r-a-c-h! S-e-r-u-n-e-h! S-e-r-u-n-e-h!
There was an unusually grating sound, and then came a strident whisper from just outside the

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swinging door. "Hold on! Stop! This is the floor!"

The dumb-waiter had stopped at Mrs. Westenhouses room. In another moment——

Mrs. Westenhouses clung to Elinor with a frenzied clasp. The maid was too terrified to stir. Waters stood watchful, with upraised shovel in one hand and poker in the other, and Elinor felt an hysterical recurrence of her desire to see her two lovers side by side.

The door was pushed open, inward. A man, huddled within the box, gave an exclamation of astonishment as he stared out at the waiting group. "Oh!" screamed the parrot.

"Hit him!" cried Mrs. Westenhouses.

But Waters didnt. He lowered his weapons. He saw there was no need for hitting anybody.

The situation at first completely embarrassed the man in the box, but then the very extremity of it braced him. In a moment he recovered himself.

"There has been a mistake," he said calmly. "Pardon me for disturbing you. I have evidently come one floor too high. I am glad to meet you again, Miss Wharton."

Mrs. Westenhouses gave a startled gasp.

"This is Mr. Marshall Hartford, a Westchester neighbor," said Elinor. "My aunt,

“QUEER MEN BELOW”

Mrs. Westenhause, let me present Mr. Hartford. Mr. Waters, let me make you acquainted with Mr. Hartford.”

Mrs. Westenhause was far from being entirely mollified. “Is it a Westchester custom to make calls by way of the dumb-waiter?” she asked with a grim smile.

Meanwhile Waters had been looking closely at Hartford, and as the two shook hands the engincer said quizzically:

“We first met at the Astoria, I believe, Mr. Hartford.”

CHAPTER XI

FOUR MEN IN A FLAT

"WHAT'S the matter?" came the voice of Brierly.

"Floor too high!" shouted Hartford; and they all laughed, and he saw the absurdity of the situation and joined in the laugh himself. "Let me down another floor."

"Must you really go so soon?" murmured Mrs. Westenhouse.

"Yes." Just then the door waiter started with a jerk. "Don't let it slip!" he called. As that it went more slowly and Hartford began gradually to disappear—first his legs, with knees hunched up, and then his chin, his mouth—and for a little the group in the room looked silently at him as people do when, their last farewells uttered, they stand and watch a railroad-train move out of a station, having nothing more to say to their friend at the car-window, yet not willing to go away while he is still in sight.

"Don't be afraid to laugh," said Hartford;

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and it was so exactly what they wanted to do that they did it gleefully. "There ought to be some red fire with this sort of disappear—" But another jerking slip of the dumb-waiter suddenly stopped him. "I don't want to go clear back to the basement!" he shouted down.

His mouth sank from sight, his nose, his eyes; and then, for a minute or so, the box stopped, leaving just the hair on the top of his head visible. "There's some kind of kink in the rope," Brierly called up.

Mrs. Westenhouse whispered apart with Elinor a moment; then she leaned over the top of the shaft-box and said: "You seem to be one of our nearest neighbors, Mr. Hartford. I should be pleased if you would drop in and see us."

"What's that?" shouted Brierly. "Who's talking?"

Hartford thanked her, and said that he should be very glad indeed to call. "But I'm not really a neighbor yet. This is my first visit to the house. I can't quite call myself a neighbor till I've at least been inside of the rooms. It isn't my idea to come up this way every time, though; and unless that kink gets out I'll have to be fed through a tube, right here."

But the dumb-waiter started again, and at

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the floor below he found that the swinging-doors were merely closed, as he had been told, and so he pushed them open and scrambled out into the room.

He struck a match and lit the gas, and took his first survey of an apartment kitchen. It was a little room—that was his first thought, for he compared it at once with the great roomy kitchen of the Westchester farmhouse. Then, as he glanced around, he saw that every foot of wall-space was occupied. At one side was the coal-range, and above it, instead of at the side (to save space), was the hot-water boiler. Close beside it was the gas-range. There was a window; there was a sink, built in with slate-stone; there were two wash-tubs, with drop-lids, making a sort of table; there was a refrigerator; there was a dresser, with shelves. And shelves were cleverly put in every otherwise unoccupied corner. Beside the doors of the dumb-waiter-shaft was a collection of bell-buttons and speaking-tubes that looked like the outfit of a pilot-house on a steamer.

He lit the gas in the next room and then opened the door for Brierly, who had by this time come up.

“Well, isn't this better than your room at the boarding-house? Aren't you ready to come in with us?”

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"It's immense!" was the enthusiastic reply. "I want to come right in, and I'm glad of the chance!" Brierly could not suspect that the proximity of Elinor gave added strength to the enthusiasm. But even without that, Hartford would have been greatly pleased.

"Four of us, and sixty dollars a month for the apartment," said Brierly. "Really a bargain, too. And then there's the joint expense of running things and of looking out for Robinson, our cook, valet, and colored gentleman-in-waiting."

"It's great!" said Hartford.

"Glad you like it. Sleep here with us tonight, of course, and have your things sent over to-morrow."

"All right. I'll be glad to do it. I like the place immensely."

"Such big rooms, too!" said Brierly.

This phase of it had not struck Hartford, and he said so. "But I haven't been in New York long, you know," he said, explanatorily apologetic for his point of view.

"Well, of course, all such things are comparative," rejoined Brierly. He felt a little hurt by what he deemed an unjust criticism. "Why, the rooms are so big!" he said. Then his face brightened. "Of course, as you see, you don't judge by New York standards yet.

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But these rooms are big! When Mr. Dick was told a room was too small to swing a cat by the tail, he said that he didn't see why any one need swing a cat by the tail there. But these rooms—you could swing a dozen cats!" He swept his arm as if there were the stretch of mighty plains. "You ought to see a lot of the Harlem flats. Small! Well, you remember that Thoreau said that whenever he passed one of those tool-boxes along the line of a railroad track it seemed to him that such a box was big enough for a home for anybody. Well, out in Harlem, families think they've lots of space when they've only got rooms that aren't a bit bigger than those boxes. Fact!"

The rooms here were really, several of them, of generous size for an apartment house, and in two of them there were open fireplaces. The house was one of those delightful places with enough of modern improvements for convenience, and yet so old-fashioned that its rents were not prohibitive. Three windows opened upon the street, and as Hartford stood at one of them he thought that this was the view upon which Elinor must frequently have looked, and it took on a deep interest from that fact. But he didn't altogether like to think of Elinor. There was Waters— But Brierly interrupted his thoughts.

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"Did you run into the people up-stairs? I thought I heard voices."

"Yes. Made an unexpected call."

"Surprised them even more than it did you, I suppose. Did they think it was a new development of this new journalism?"

"No, I don't think they thought of journalism."

"I wonder who they are. There's an awfully handsome girl. Did you see her?"

"Yes; she is Miss Wharton, a neighbor and friend of mine from the Croton River country."

Brierly stared with a droll expression. "Well, of all the luck!" But whether he meant the luck of Hartford or that of himself, in view of a prospective introduction, was not altogether clear.

Then he said: "If we're going to get back to the office to-night, we'll have to be getting ready. As Robinson isn't here suppose we forage for ourselves. I know there's enough in the larder, and between us we may cook something."

There was the sound of a key in the lock, and an alert-eyed colored lad came in. "I was off at church, Mistah Brierly," he said, drawing his face down soberly.

"At church?"

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"I'se secretary of the Young Men's Social-dom Union," he said, "and to-night we had a rehearsaling for our ball."

"A rehearsal for your ball, eh? And what church is this?"

"Saint Benedick the Mooh, sah."

"And who was Saint Benedict the Moor?"

"I don't know, sah; but he was a big black man."

"Clever idea for the church, isn't it?" said Brierly, as Robinson hastened to get out something to eat. "A colored saint! It's a mighty good idea."

Robinson was deft and expert as a cook, and made the gas-range do miracles. In a few minutes he was serving a delightful supper. "I never know what to call my meals," said Brierly. "We take breakfast when other people lunch, and we lunch—if we're fortunate enough to get a chance—when other people are dining, and Heaven knows when we dine. I know I've often done it after midnight."

Though Hartford entered gaily into Brierly's talk, he felt sore at heart. For here he had been in New York, working for the fame and fortune that should justify him in loving Elinor, and now Waters was apparently winning her. But he gradually pulled himself together. After all, he did not know that Elinor was lost

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to him. How foolish, then, prematurely to give up! He would make an effort to win her in spite of Waters. And what an advantage fate had given him in placing him in the very house in which Elinor was visiting. Why shouldn't he win! And so his spirits and his determination rose.

As he prepared, with Brierly, to leave the apartment, he said: "I must just run up-stairs a moment, after my funny first call. I'll be back in a minute."

Waters was still there, and Hartford greeted all of them with a manner which Mrs. Westenhous herself could not but like. "I want to apologize for my unceremonious call a little while ago," said he, "and for frightening you, Mrs. Westenhous, and Miss Wharton."

"You are quite forgiven," said Mrs. Westenhous.

There were a few words of general talk -- general, except that Elinor held aloof with a sort of thoughtful detachment. Her eyes seemed full of some wistful problem, and she was very silent. Hartford noticed that she said scarcely a word. She looked, once in a while, from one to the other of the men in a way that, to Hartford, seemed oddly as if she were comparing them.

"The water is very deep in the valley now,"

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she said suddenly. "There is a great, great lake there."

Hartford's heart leaped. Why had her mind gone back to that valley? Was she thinking of the day he had waved a parting to her across the space where now the waters lay?

"Well, I must be going," he said lamely.

"We should be glad if you would not hurry away so," said Mrs. Westenhause.

"I should very much like to stay, but I must get back to work," replied Hartford.

"Work!" exclaimed Elinor; and then she checked herself and colored. "I was only thinking how late it is, and of how much later it seems to one of Westchester traditions than to New Yorkers of years' standing," she said. And at this the parrot, which had been quietly dozing, woke up and croaked: "Queer men below!"

"It's newspaper work," said Hartford, "and it really does make a man feel as if he is in topsy-turvy land."

"I didn't know what you were doing," said Elinor. "Isn't newspaper work very fascinating?"

"Indeed it is," responded Hartford; and it pleased him to notice that Elinor was interested in what he was doing in the big city. Meanwhile Mrs. Westenhause looked at him

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with a gaze of astonished inquiry, as if he were—what indeed he was—the first newspaper man that she had ever seen.

“What paper are you with?” asked Elinor.

“I’m on the Diurnal. I’m sorry that I must hurry away so.” And with a hasty good-night he went off. He felt that there might be questions in regard to the appearance of Elinor’s name in the paper, and though he knew he had acted with propriety in making her figure in his story of the strike episode, he did not want to talk about it. He rejoined Brierly and the two went down-stairs.

Waters, when he had gone, looked at Mrs. Westenhouse quizzically and said: “Now you see the explanation of the mystery of the Diurnal article.”

“Those newspaper men!” sighed Mrs. Westenhouse.

“Oh, if you meet them, you’ll find them mostly a very good set of fellows!” said Waters. He thought he discerned in her tone a certain suspicious attitude of mind in regard to them.

“But to think of newspaper men so close—” She paused. The prospect bewildered and daunted her.

“Oh, they can’t hurt you,” said Waters, “and they don’t want to. You won’t find your name in any of the papers, I assure you,



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unless you become a central figure in a riot again."

"No, no, no!" she exclaimed. "I'll keep out of riots after this." She paused a little. "He certainly looks like an agreeable young man," she said.

"And at least," said Waters, "Miss Wharton will now understand better what she termed the omniscience of modern journalism."

Hartford had an assignment that night that took him across to a little town on the Jersey shore by way of Fort Lee ferry. It was after one o'clock when he got back to his new home (the apartment house was near Washington Square) and all three of his fellow tenants were in, and Knightson and Jenkins warmly welcomed him. Elinor, waking, heard their jolly laughter, but in an hour or so they were quiet. The fact that Hartford knew the people upstairs had been told to the others by Brierly, and for one night, at least, so they declared, they would not bring reproach upon him by unseemly conduct. "I thought the old lady looked at me rather glum and doubtful when we passed on the landing yesterday," said Knightson.

The next morning Hartford was up first, at half-past ten. Robinson was out making some morning purchases. There came the buzzing ring of a bell.

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"What is it, Brierly?" asked Hartford. "And how'll I get at them or let them get at us?" He had already gone deep into the mysteries of the tubes.

"Just push the door-button by the dumb-waiter. Push anything you see, and the bell 'll stop."

Hartford began pushing and the ringing ceased.

"I thought you might go clear down-stairs to the front door," said Brierly sleepily. "That's what men from the country usually do. Now, tell me honest: the first time you went to see any one at an apartment house did you know enough, after touching the electric button, to listen for the click and then push the door right open and walk up-stairs?"

Hartford laughed. "What's the use of asking me to confess anything of that sort?" he said.

No one came up the stairs, although Hartford went to the button again and gave it a long series of pushings to be sure that it opened the door. "Must be a letter in the box," called out Knightson; "we'll get it when we go out."

At a little after eleven they all sat down to breakfast. "This is the one time of the day that we can be sure of being together, and we can't always be sure of this," said Jenkins.

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"No; we often have morning assignments," said Brierly. "Only a few days ago I was hurried out of bed by a telegram telling me to catch the eight o'clock train for Philadelphia."

The talk turned, naturally enough, to house-keeping. "It's all right for unmarried newspaper men to keep house together. If they are congenial it's a very pleasant way to live; makes a regular bachelor apartment at comparatively small expense. But getting married is another thing. A newspaper man has no right to be married." It was Jenkins who said this.

"But why hasn't he?" asked Hartford.

"The hours are too long and too irregular, and he seldom has his evenings for himself. And make an engagement for your day off and you're very liable to get a telegram, 'Please come to the office at once.' And of course you go. It's hard enough for bachelors, but it's worse for married men, and it's infinitely worse for their wives. It's a terribly lonely life for them—or at least it's apt to be."

"But Shotterly likes it, and his wife likes it!" cried Hartford. "Why, he was telling me only last week—I don't see him very often now, and two or three times when I was to go to his rooms with him one or the other of us had an assignment——"

"Just what I was saying."

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"Well, Shotterly's just as enthusiastic as it's possible to be about the advantages of home. He said, too, that he tries to have Mrs. Shotterly know all the nice people she can, and has her accept all the invitations she can, even if he can't go with her. He says there's no reason at all why a newspaper man shouldn't be married."

As Hartford paused he felt that a sudden constraint had fallen, and he noticed that Knightson and Brierly glanced at each other. "Shotterly's an awfully good chap," said Knightson softly. "He's white all the way through."

"He's got faults," said Brierly, "and I suppose we all have; but he's straightforward & I mighty well deserves the best there is."

Hartford was so pleased with these praises of a man whom he liked that he did not notice their apparent inconsequence.

The breakfast over, the four men filed downstairs, and at the foot of the last flight they met Elinor Wharton coming up. She flashed a charming glance at Hartford, and he bowed as he returned her good-morning, and four hats rose as one.

"Well, of all the luck!" exclaimed Brierly soberly, as the four started off abreast on the sidewalk for the Elevated station at Eighth Street.

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"Well, of all the luck!" repeated Jenkins, with equal soberness.

"Well, of all the luck!" said Knightson, more soberly still.

And then there fell a silence.

Hartford thought of Elinor a great deal that day, and he thought, too, of the declarations in regard to a newspaper man's marrying. "Well, I'm planning to do magazine work, anyhow," he thought. And then he laughed at himself.

But in one way or another the question of marriage kept coming up all day. One phase of it was a scene in the Jefferson Market Court. He had gone there to report the hearing in a curious case of burglary, and while waiting for the prisoner to be arraigned he watched the squalid procession that files past the bar for hour after hour of every day.

One case was that of a little man who was charged with desertion by a woman of determined visage and powerful frame. She poured forth her story in a torrent. "Silence!" roared the court crier. But she did not check the flow of her talk.

"Judge, your honor," said the little man, standing on tiptoe and bending forward over the rail of the bar.

"Yes," said the magistrate encouragingly.

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"Judge, your honor, I've stood that—for—eight—years."

"Eight years!" gasped the magistrate.

"Eight years," was the solemn response.

"And you are charged with desertion! You are discharged, sir—honorably discharged." And then he added, in one of those offhand observations that so often bring the police magistrates into the newspapers in the rôle of social preceptors: "I often think that marriage is a failure here in New York. I see so much to make me believe it so."

But Hartford was not in a humor to be influenced by anything but happy auguries.

He was up at Central Park, later in the day, where he got a half-column story in regard to a new hippopotamus that had just been received at the Zoo, and which had given the keepers trouble in handling it. On his way back, at the Plaza entrance of the park, he saw Ward, the millionaire, driving in a trap with a radiantly handsome woman with rich lips, with soft complexion, with great deep eyes; and both looked so proud and so gay that his own heart beat more joyously. To him it was a clear proof that Shotterly, and not Jenkins, was right.

That evening, after his last assignment was finished, he went into Siple's with Streets, and in a few minutes in came Shotterly. "Glad to

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see you!" he exclaimed, stepping forward and grasping Hartford's hand. "And how is the son of the senator? I've just been up in the Diurnal office looking for you. I wired Mrs. Shotterly that I should bring three or four friends home with me, and so in a little while we'll go up there. I'll show you bachelors how good a thing it is to have a home and a fireside. Come along with us, Streets; and you, too, Knightson."

In half an hour the party, seven strong, started out of Siple's. Arm in arm they swept the sidewalk, all seven abreast, and as they marched to the Third Avenue station a song trolled out, loud and joyously:

"For he's a jolly good fellow,
Which nobody can deny."

But somehow, in the jovial song, there seemed to Hartford to be a tang of threatened sorrow. He could not analyze the impression; could not understand it. A sudden chill wind swept drearily along Park Row. And again the jolly chorus gaily rose.

CHAPTER XII

THE PRIZE MRS. SHOTTERLY WON

WHEN they reached the apartment-house where the Shotterlys lived the big building was dark. Shotterly led them all joyously to the entrance and there stopped short.

"Hang it!" he exclaimed, feeling in one pocket after another, "I haven't got my key with me."

He looked around at the men, and they all grinned back at him from where they stood, semicircled on the sidewalk.

"Hall-boy goes home at eleven," said Shotterly. "Don't want to rout out the janitor, for we've not been here much more than a week and I've already done it twice. Rouses the house, too. What'll I do?"

"Let Hartford go up in the dumb-waiter," said Brierly with a chuckle. "That's the way to do it. Rode him up in one only last night."

"Pull him up! Pull him up!" exclaimed the others. "Great idea!"

"But there's no way of getting in at the

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dumb-waiter," said Shotterly. "We'd make Hartford pay the penalty of being able to do things, if there were."

"Boost Streets up to the fire-escape," said Jenkins. "Better that one man be shot for a burglar than that seven suffer from the wrath of a janitor untimely aroused!"

Shotterly backed out into the street and whistled. He whistled again a little louder. Soon a window on the fourth floor was thrown up and a woman's head appeared.

"We can't get in," said Shotterly hoarsely. The woman laughed. It was a musical laugh, Hartford noticed. "Wait a minute," she said.

Shotterly walked back to the step. All waited for the door to be opened. It could not be unlocked by pushing a button in the room above, not only because both the outside and inside doors were shut but because the button system of door-opening is not used in houses that have hall-boys.

If they had looked up again they would have seen that the woman reappeared at the window. Then there was a slight clink, clink, clink.

The man on the second floor below Shotterly's rooms dreamed that he heard the sound of ice tinkling in a glass. It was a pleasant dream; but in another moment he was awake, and realized that the sound was as if a burglar

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were trying to get in at a front window. There was no fire-escape on the front of the building, so the prowler must have come along the broad ledge.

The man tiptoed softly to the window and quickly raised it. No one there. He poked his head out and saw the group below. "What is it—fire?" he cried excitedly.

"We want to get in!" chorused the seven; and at that moment the key, dangling at the end of a long string, tapped Shotterly in the face. "Here we are!" he cried; and he triumphantly led the way into the building.

"All hands walk. Elevator's stopped running." And up the stairs the party gaily trooped, with a hubbub of laughter and jests. "And we mustn't disturb the neighbors," the leader added.

Mrs. Shotterly received them at the door. "My maid has gone to bed; it doesn't seem fair to make her get up after midnight." But her tone was very pleasant, and it was clear that she did not wish it understood that there was any hardship for herself in being up.

She was the radiantly beautiful woman whom Hartford had seen late that very afternoon driving with Ward. How pleasant it must be, he thought, to be on such close terms with a millionaire.

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Mrs. Shotterly was acquainted with only two of the callers, Knightson and Streets, and the others, in turn, were presented to her. As she took Hartford's hand, and he met her slow, bright smile, he thought her distinctly charming.

All seemed to feel at home instantly. They talked and told stories, and then Shotterly proposed a Welsh rabbit, and Mrs. Shotterly, after daintily getting out the ingredients, retreated to the kitchen to make the toast, whereupon Brander, a Globe man, and Jenkins, begged her to let them help by toasting themselves and the bread.

"Take their offer, Mrs. Shotterly; don't try to save the brand—er—from the burning," said Brierly. And so the two went into the kitchen and took turns at holding the bread under the flame in the gas-range, while Shotterly, assisted by the laughing counsel of all the others, began to make the rabbit—all the others but Hartford, that is, for he had never seen a rabbit made, and looked on eagerly.

"I don't want anybody but Streets to help me," said Shotterly; "he knows how." And, indeed, Hartford admired the finicky deftness of Streets in helping to slice the cheese into little cubes, and then in getting just the proper portion of the paprika and the Worcestershire and

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the ale, while Shotterly stirred the rabbit in the chafing-dish and watched the flame of the alcohol-lamp.

Mrs. Shotterly and her aids came in with the toast, to which they had given just the proper crispy brown; and then, as the rabbit was served, there were more laughter and jokes, and there were songs. They forgot all about disturbing other people in the house, and the verses rolled out in a mighty chorus, with Shotterly's tenor soaring high and clear.

Hartford did not tell any stories, but listened with the keenest enjoyment; and after a while Mrs. Shotterly, who noticed that he was more silent than the others, devoted herself to him in her most fascinating way, and he began to respond to the spell. There was something fresh and inexperienced about him that pleased her; she found that he was comparatively new in the city, and it took her back to the time when she herself had come there, a stranger. How long ago that all seemed now!

Urged on by her flattering assurance that he had a story worth the telling, Hartford told of his interview with Father Tennent in the confessional. The story was greeted with attention and applause, and it made him tingle with delight. "And so that's how I was beat-

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en!" exclaimed Shotterly. "I remember, now, that you wouldn't give it up and go away when I did."

"Yes; and you don't know how glad I was that we didn't meet that evening as we had planned to do," said Hartford.

"And that reminds me," said Streets, "of the very different kind of story that they tell of Brander here, of an interview he had with Father Tennent. He didn't chase Father Tennent to the confessional—he found him in his study; but Tennent made Brander go to confession himself."

Brander, hearing his own name, stepped nearer. "What's that you're saying about me, Streets?"

"Just about another saving from the burning, apparently," remarked Brierly.

But Streets waved his hand for silence, and there was a chorus of "Go on! go on!"

"It was this way. Tennent saw at once, when Brander began talking to him (it was on some church matter or other), that he was a Catholic. And he also fancied, or gathered somehow, that Brander seemed to be in need of the ministrations of the church——"

"Oh, my prophetic soul!" interpolated Brierly.

"So before he answered any questions, he

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said: 'My son, have you been to confession lately?'

"Brander was nonplused, but managed to say: 'Oh, yes; I went a week ago.'

"But Father Tennent—we all know he's a shrewd sort of fellow—wasn't satisfied. 'To whom did you confess?' he demanded.

"'To Father Bucey,' said Brander.

"Father Tennent laughed. No, that won't do,' he said; 'they all tell me it's Father Bucey. What you mean is that you haven't confessed for a year.' And Brander had to admit that that was about the truth of the case, and then he had to get right down on his knees and go through it all—and a mighty long string it must have been—before Tennent would let him begin his interview."

Everybody shouted, and Brander himself joined in the uproar. "It's too good a story to deny!" he cried.

The apartment contained seven rooms, all of them large. Shotterly began to show them with pride. "We like the neighborhood, too. And just over there you can catch a glimpse of Central Park—when it's daylight."

They gathered again in the big sitting-room.

"The man who said that he wanted to have neither poverty nor riches wasn't a New Yorker," declared Brierly. "In this city the

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rich may easily be happy ; they have only themselves to blame if they aren't. And hosts of the poor are happy. They live in their bustling and gossipy environment, surrounded by an endless number of friends and acquaintance. Their expenses are light and their wants and pleasures are easily gratified. They may seem unhappy to the smug and well-dressed visitor who impertinently looks in to patronize and pity them, but the vast majority of the East Side folk are happy. But take, on the other hand, the young married couple who have tastes above buttons——”

“ We have buttons in the hall below,” said Shotterly.

“ Not after eleven, though,” said Hartford.

“——with fine tastes, with culture, with a desire for the refined and the elegant things of life—it's one of the most difficult and often heart-breaking things for them to find a home if they don't want to live off in the suburbs. They must get in a proper part of the city, and——well, it's only the poor, like the East Side tenement people, or the very rich, like the Vanderbilts, or like Shotterly here——”

There was a burst of laughter. “ I saw him pasting up his space-string only yesterday,” said Jenkins. “ We don't all have strings like that.”

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"Let me tell you something, fellows," said Shotterly. "Here's a pointer for those about to be married. No; don't say 'Don't,' any of you. The pointer is, that every real estate agent in the city, with good apartments, is anxious to offer you a couple of months free. And when, like ourselves, you join the innumerable caravan that moves——"

"The—er—what?"

"——the innumerable caravan that moves, you'll begin to figure out possibilities."

Meanwhile Hartford had found a quiet place at one side, and he sat there silent, thinking how fine it would be to have a wife and a home, and midnight suppers, and Welsh rabbits, and congenial friends. Why, it would be a life of ideal happiness. And Mrs. Shotterly, seeing him so still, went and sat down by him. His frank buoyancy appealed to her, and she talked sympathetically with him and gazed at him with her big eyes, and tried to make him talk of his ambitions. It all made him feel very happy.

"Won't you sing something for us, Mrs. Shotterly?" he said.

She smiled and shook her head. "Oh, you really mustn't ask me that!"

But he insisted. "Please do; we should all enjoy it so much." Whereupon she smiled and

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flushed, and was more delightful than ever. "If I really must——"

She sat down at the piano and touched the keys gently and looked around and said: "But I must be careful not to sing loud, for it might wake somebody in the house." And they all laughed at that, for they had completely forgotten themselves—or at least had forgotten the other people in the building—and had laughed and talked in gay noisiness.

She sang a little French love-song, and her voice was all coos and gentle calls, and Hartford was thrilled. How the song fitted, too, he thought, with that dress she was wearing—something green, shimmering through black net and cut off short at the elbows. She saw that he was affected, and she looked straight at him with her great eyes, and the music went to his heart. But when he spoke to her after the song she was cold and indifferent toward him. "I mustn't let him make a goose of himself," she thought. She did not suspect that it was really Elinor that he saw as he looked at her so fixedly; that it was really Elinor's voice he heard; that it was of Elinor he was thinking when he gazed at her with such deep absorption; that she, in her beautiful womanhood, was but representative of the more wistful beauty of Elinor.

Shotterly, rummaging for a book of college

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songs, uttered an exclamation. "Hallo!" he said. "What's this?"

He held up a diamond sunburst, and his face had a puzzled look. If Mrs. Shotterly's face paled ever so little Shotterly did not notice it. Knightson, however, was looking at her with a strange intentness.

"Oh," said Mrs. Shotterly indifferently, "I won that at the whist club this afternoon and tucked it in an out-of-the-way place for safety!"

"That so!" exclaimed her husband heartily. "You're in luck, Zoe! But aren't they going up in the value of prizes?"

"Perhaps a little—not much. But this was for a special prize, anyhow—for a series." She gathered the entire party about her with a look and a gesture. "The club's really so much fun that it would be a shame not to tell about it. Mrs. Bristolbird—you know of her; enormously wealthy, Riverside Park—well, she is the mainstay, and gives most of the money for the prizes. She won't have any but expensive ones, and she generally chooses silver or cut-glass; then she just as generally wins the prizes herself. We meet at her home oftener than anywhere else, and she has a shelf built all about the room, and on it is the greatest collection of cut-glass claret-jugs, silver berry-bowls, and punch-

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bowls, pearl-handled dinner-knives, and all sorts of expensive things. Two or three members (we're all women, you know) are in the club because they're very rich, and a few because they're such good players, and the rest because they happened to know somebody and were asked to join. But you never saw anything like the grim earnest of the games, with such prizes. Why, we start about one o'clock on our meeting days and generally play in fierce earnest until dark. But it's seldom that anybody but Mrs. Bristolbird wins. To-day's game was particularly close; Mrs. Bristolbird was kept away by an attack of gout (it's worse to-night, I'm sure), and the contest lay between Mrs. Westenhause and myself, and I was the fortunate one." She glanced negligently at the glowing diamonds and carelessly handed the pin back to her husband.

He enthusiastically passed it on for examination. "Zoe, you're a wonder!" he cried. "I must congratulate you; and I'll congratulate myself, too, on having such a clever wife. Who is this Mrs. Westenhause—the widow of the civil engineer? Yes? I used to meet him quite often. By the way, didn't her husband leave her pretty wealthy?"

"Not quite that; but he left some money and a piece of property that advanced in price some

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three hundred per cent. in about three years, and so she's comfortably well-to-do."

Knightson noticed that there was a lack of naturalness in all this. Her look and manner were perfect (unless, indeed, there were a paleness about the corners of the mouth and an ever-so slight nervousness in her voice), but Knightson asked himself why she was at the pains to give all these little details instead of frankly showing the sunburst and receiving compliments on having won it.

She turned to the piano and dashed her fingers lightly over the keys. "Sing something else for us," begged Hartford.

"What'll it be?" she asked.

And Knightson, who was leaning on the piano and looking down at her, said: "Sing 'Douglas,' Mrs. Shotterly." He was holding the sunburst in his hand. His voice was cold and there was an odd note in it. She glanced swiftly up at him and her eyes were held by his. "Oh," she whispered, "not that!"

Shotterly bustled forward. "Did you say 'Douglas'?' Just the song! Why, that used to be Mrs. Shotterly's greatest favorite just after we were married! I like those old-fashioned things."

He stood at the piano, at the opposite end from Knightson, looking lovingly and proudly

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down at his wife. And she slowly withdrew her eyes from Knightson's and gazed straight ahead of her. And Hartford thought that for a moment he saw a look of terror, of bewilderment. But surely he was mistaken. So he put the fancy away.

Mrs. Shotterly sang, and her voice was full of feeling, of strong emotion. She did not look up at her husband, but his face showed protecting love, perfect trustfulness. And how tender and how true John was toward her, she thought. How much, after all, he deserved from her! Why had Mr. Knightson made her sing this, with John there to look at her? And as she sang she knew that the words were a condemnation of herself, and not of John:

"I would be so faithful, so loving, Douglas,
Douglas, Douglas, tender and true."

Her voice broke and she stopped abruptly. "I feel cold," she said. "Isn't there a draught?" She shivered.

Shotterly got a light wrap and drew it about her shoulders. Then he hovered over her solicitously. "What is it? Do you feel ill?" he asked.

She drew away from him almost irritably. "Thank you, but I'm all right again," she said.

The atmosphere of gaiety had been quite

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lost, but Streets and Brierly instantly set themselves to restore it.

After a while Shotterly called them all to order. "Now, I'm going to get out what ale there is left in the refrigerator, and you can all drink my health," he said.

"What for? What for?" they cried.

But he would not answer till the bottles and glasses were produced. Then he said:

"I'm going on the Diurna' again to-morrow."

"We and the Diurnal should be congratulated on that," put in Brierly.

"Thanks. But the important thing, to me, is that I'm going back as city editor."

They drained their glasses with an enthusiastic shout and then came a chorus of questions. They wanted especially to know about Severn.

"Severn is going to be managing editor," said Shotterly.

And through it all Mrs. Shotterly looked at her husband in curious questioning. She knew that this meant a large salary, for the Diurnal paid any man well who could hold that important position. Ward, had he seen her, would have said that she was wondering whether by any chance her husband could fill the position satisfactorily, and that she was almost certain that he couldn't. Ward would have been right,

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thus far, but would have fathomed but a portion of her thoughts. In truth, her mind was in a turmoil.

The men said good night and went away noisily, shouting back repetitions of their congratulations to Shotterly as they went downstairs. Then Zoe herself turned to him and said in a low voice: "John, let me congratulate you, too. You deserve a great success."

"I knew you'd be glad!" he cried joyously.

Her face had a look of curious scrutiny—an expression, indeed, as if the scrutiny were mainly introspective.

Mrs. Shotterly did not sleep that night. For the few hours that remained before daylight she lay wide-eyed and agitated. The moon crept slowly past the window, and it shone upon a face that was full of troubled doubt.

CHAPTER XIII

WITH ELINOR ON RIVERSIDE

LIKE iron which, after being long in the furnace, suddenly reaches an exaltation of heat, so did the heart of Marshall Hartford suddenly glow from the fire of love. And jealousy was the fuel to the flame.

He had for months known that he loved Elinor. His love had come upon him gradually. Looking back, he saw that, compared with what he now felt, it had at first been tepid. Their Westchester acquaintance had looked upon them as lovers, and there had been a general belief that the sole reason why some understanding had not been reached was the hostility between Hartford's uncle and the father of Elinor, and that this hostility had checked what would otherwise have been a simple and pretty love-affair.

But now Hartford realized the difference—realized that though his love had inspired him to forceful energy it was tame compared with his present feeling. He knew that he could not

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have left the Westchester country, could not have left Elinor, without speaking of his affection and at least asking her to wait for him, had he before loved as he now loved. Living in the same building with her, and knowing that Waters frequently called, his love changed to a fervid heat. Unhappy is the lover forced, like Hartford, to be jealous of a rival possessing the qualities which justify success.

But, in spite of his suddenly intensified love, Hartford did not neglect his work. And work of a hard and satisfactory kind was given to him under the city editorship of Shotterly. Hartford's natural ability and his energy had made it possible to advance him rapidly in the importance of his assignments, and Shotterly liked him so well that he gave him as good stories as he was able to undertake.

The glamour, the fascination of the life and of the work, had entered into him. The force, the tremendous energy, the intensity of it all, more and more appealed to him. He already loved the very atmosphere of the newspaper rooms; he was happy in them; he liked the sight of the littered desks, of the swinging electric lights; he breathed with satisfaction the tobacco-smoke air scented with printer's ink; he loved the buzz and hum of the big building, and the sound of hurrying pencils was a delight.

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Most of all he loved the atmosphere of success, of achievement. He felt proud of being a part of this strong and capable life.

He liked, too, the pleasant conversations of the men, when a few of them would gather about one or another of the desks and talk, while waiting for the assignments that would scatter them.

One day the subject of woman was mentioned in a little group that had come together at Hartford's own desk, and he was instantly all attention.

"Woman is like public office," said Jenkins oracularly.

"I can see a good many reasons why; but *just why?*" said Brierly.

"Why, it's a mistake to think that either a woman or an office seeks the man. If either is worth the having you've got to hustle."

"'Tis true, 'tis pithy," said Brierly. "I never got either an office or a wife, myself; I suppose I never hustled enough."

"Yes; if it's either a woman or an office, you've got to make up your mind to struggle hard for it. Neither the woman nor the office worth the having seeks the man," repeated Jenkins, rather proud of his phraseology and deeming it epigrammatic.

"If you're not married, you miss the painful pleasure of reading the paper before breakfast

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as you lie in bed, and complaining to your wife of the copy-reader that butchered your story or the night editor who ordered it cut down," said Streets.

Hartford was about to say something himself, but at that moment came the call of the city editor: "Mr. Hartford!" And he walked to the desk and was given an assignment—it was a Sunday—to cover an afternoon meeting at the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church.

"It's something special, and a number of ministers from other churches are to take part. One of the speakers is to be Doctor Fieldhill. You remember him?"

Hartford did. And how long ago that dinner at the Astoria seemed. "You don't object to going, do you?" said Shotterly, and there was a twinkle in his eyes.

Arriving at the church and being shown to a pew far up near the pulpit, Hartford saw that Mrs. Westenhous and Waters and Elinor were in a pew diagonally in front of him. The sight made him quiver with love and with jealousy, for from the expression on the face of Waters and in his unmistakable though slight air of ownership, of proprietorship, Hartford saw clearly that the engineer considered himself a favored man. And how Elinor from time to time glanced at him!

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But in Hartford lay the capacity of being at his best when faced with difficulties, of rising to meet an emergency, and he pulled himself together and determined not to give up, but to do his utmost to win the girl he loved.

He forced himself practically to disregard Elinor and Waters and to think of the speakers and of what they were saying. Every once in a while, however, the magnet drew his eyes, and he noticed the soft curves of Elinor's hair, and with what exquisite grace it was arranged. He liked the way in which she held her shoulders. He was fascinated by her charming profile.

Doctor Fieldhill's address was, unexpectedly, the feature of the meeting. He spoke with energy and vigor, and said, after outlining ideas of radical trend, that it was largely to the famous Mayor Malrose that these ideas were due, for the inception of them had come in the course of a talk with the mayor some weeks before.

When the meeting broke up, Hartford noticed how protectingly Waters hovered about Elinor; and then, with two other reporters, he went forward to speak with Doctor Fieldhill, for they saw in the reference to Mayor Malrose a chance for something more of interest. And to the three the doctor eulogized the mayor highly, and told of having met him at a dinner, and of some things the mayor had said.

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Doctor Fieldhill did not remember Hartford. The face struck him as familiar, but that was all. It amused Hartford, and he told Shotterly of it.

"It was so incredible," said Shotterly, "that any one of the guests at that millionaire dinner of mine could be a reporter that it wasn't possible for the doctor to think of such a thing. Heaven knows, Senator, just what he thought you were when he met you at the dinner; but he knew you were either a great man or a wealthy one, and so of course he could never recognize you in a different form; for though we should all like to be great and wealthy, I presume it is no violation of confidence to say that you and I haven't yet reached either destination."

"I saw a policeman on Sixth Avenue a couple of days ago," rejoined Hartford, "who looked exactly like the pictures of General Grant. And it made me think that if pretty nearly any great man should put on a police uniform and walk up and down the streets he would not be recognized. People might notice the resemblance, but that would be all."

"Yes, it makes one realize how easy it is to be disguised by trusting to people's being sure they know," said Shotterly.

Hartford was told how much space to write

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(it was a generous allowance) and went to his desk to turn it out, congratulating himself on the number of dollars that his story would represent to him, measured by inches, the next day, but also realizing that, should more important matter come in, his story would be ruthlessly cut and his earnings thus decreased.

Until the following Wednesday, which was his day off, Hartford did not again see Elinor, though once in a while he thought he heard her up-stairs, and several times she thought she distinguished his voice in the murmur of talk that came up from the rooms of the four newspaper men.

But on Wednesday, early in the afternoon, he called, and was not displeased to find that Mrs. Westenhause was not at home. He had dearly longed for a chance to be with Elinor, to talk with her. He was at his best, for he had begun to feel that his case was nearly hopeless. He was bright and vivacious, and was delighted to find her sparkling in return. Now and again he felt her eyes measuring him, weighing him, and he gallantly met the inspection with his most debonair manner.

Only the evening before he had passed Waters in the hallway, and in the engineer's face was a look of happiness. But Hartford felt confident that no definite promise had yet

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been made. Surely Elinor would not meet him with such frankness if she were actually promised to another; unless, indeed, she looked upon him merely as a friendly neighbor making a friendly call.

It was a beautiful day, with the sun shining bright and a cool wind blowing, and he asked her if she would take a walk with him; and when she frankly said that she would he was buoyant with joy.

They walked into Washington Square and admired the noble arch, and then they turned up Fifth Avenue, and she asked him about his work and his ambition. It was on the tip of his tongue to tell her that his main ambition was to win her; but in spite of her cordiality there was a reserve in her manner, a certain touch of chilliness, which warned him not to venture too far. And from time to time, in the silences that fell, she would glance at him almost abstractedly, and oddly again as if studying, weighing, comparing him.

She was dressed in a tailor-made gown of soft gray, and her little hands were gray-gloved. Her hair rippled out from underneath a hat that was made of folds of black velvet. Never before, thought Hartford, had he seen her so charming, and he was lovingly proud of her. He felt, too, that she was admired by many a

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man and many a woman who caught sight of her striking young beauty.

She asked him if he had had much difficulty in getting a foothold in New York, and he spoke very briefly of his struggles and dwelt more on his success in getting upon the staff of the *Diurnal*. Then he told of his greatly improved prospects under the city editorship of his friend, and of how fine a man Shotterly was, how good a heart he had, how he won friends on every side, and how he was making a splendid city editor.

Her eyes grew softer as he talked with such enthusiasm of his friend. "You are warmly loyal," she said. He knew from the tone that she liked him for it, but it stopped the flow of his praise.

"I met a Mrs. Shotterly at a whist club the other day," she said. "I wonder if she is his wife."

"Yes," said Hartford. "Only a few days ago I heard her speak of the club."

"I liked her, and yet I didn't like her," said Elinor. "She interested me as a woman of unusual characteristics, but I felt as if I did not understand her."

One of the big Fifth Avenue stages went lumbering by. "Suppose we take it," he said; "it'll be a lark."

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For a moment she hesitated, then laughed and said, "All right"; and he hailed the stage, and they mounted to the high top-seat and were jogged up the avenue, each of them talking with animation of the houses and the churches and the big hotels. "I dined with Shotterly there on the evening of my first day in New York," Hartford said, as they passed the Astoria. "It was very funny, and some time I must tell you about it." Then he soberly stopped, for he remembered that Waters, too, was one of the party, and he had never been quite able to understand whether Waters thought he had acted with deception on that night. But at least he felt sure that Waters had said nothing against him.

They wandered across Central Park and then took a street-car up Eighth Avenue, and at Seventy-fifth Street got out and went over to Riverside Park. They felt a sense of inspiration as they walked along, with the Palisades rising from the farther side of the magnificent river and with the splendid promontory hemming in the view. "Indian Head, isn't it?" she said softly.

And under the spell of the grave beauty of water and cliff and grassy expanse they were for a time silent, and then Hartford spoke again of his ambitions; and in his tone, his manner,

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he showed clearly to the gray-gowned girl beside him that it was for her he was working, for her that he was striving to win a notable success.

"There are great possibilities in the work, Elinor," he said, "and there are other possibilities to which it may be a stepping-stone."

Her voice was very gentle as she replied to him, as she asked him questions, and as she commented upon what he said. But as he grew warmer and warmer he felt that she was drawing away from him—not in doubt or distrust, but as if she were in some strange perplexity. When he looked into her eyes there was a mystery there, and he knew that he must try no more.

"I must be going back," she said. And they walked to the Elevated, and almost in silence rode down-town.

Mrs. Westenhause was at home when they returned, and Hartford thought that she met him with somewhat of disapproval. He stepped inside with Elinor and met Waters, who had come for dinner and was to accompany the two ladies to the theater that evening. Both Hartford and Waters were a trifle taken aback, and Waters looked at Elinor with a touch of censure which Hartford thought she resented, and the thought made him happy. Waters did not

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know how gently Elinor had often looked that afternoon at the young newspaper man. And Hartford did not know that only the day before Elinor had received a letter from her father speaking approvingly of Waters.

The letter was brief but full of a fatherly love. Mr. Wharton told Elinor that he liked Waters, and was pleased that such a man should wish to pay his addresses to her.

“Be perfectly frank with yourself; be sure you are making no mistake; and then, if you should come to love Waters, I should be greatly pleased.”

Then the letter went on:

“I was afraid that you might fall in love with young Hartford, who gave me the impression of trying to court you when he lived here. The young man seems likable enough, and there is no reason why you should not be friendly with him, now that he is, as I understand, living in the same house as you are; but I am glad there is no prospect of anything else.”

On account of this letter Elinor had felt no hesitation in following her own impulse and meeting Hartford with bright cordiality. “Be

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sure you are making no mistake," her father said; and so she ought to study Marshall Hartford while she was shyly hesitating as to the promptings of her heart. "There is no reason why you should not be friendly with him;" and so it was right to go out with him for an afternoon stroll.

Hartford, of course, remained but a few minutes. "May I bring my three fellow-neighbors with me some evening?" he said to Mrs. West-
enhouse as he was leaving.

"Certainly. I shall be pleased to meet them," said she.

"We are all on the staff of the Diurnal, and the city editor is the husband of a friend of yours," he said—"Mrs. Shotterly."

"The husband of Mrs. Shotterly! Oh, yes, she is one of the brightest members of our whist club. I was sorry not to see her at our meeting last week."

Mrs. Shotterly not at the meeting last week! Hartford felt strangely stunned, and he made his adieus and went, deeply thoughtful, to his rooms. Mrs. Shotterly not at last week's meeting! He had been on the very point of commenting on the splendid prize that she had won, but it was as if a restraining hand had suddenly touched him. He remembered now, with a flash of retrospective cognition, that Knightson had

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looked at Mrs. Shotterly with a sorrowful gravity. No, he could not speak of the diamond, could not even hint of it, to any one. And, after all, might there not be some mistake as to which week and which meeting were referred to?

CHAPTER XIV

A LATE VISITOR FOR MRS. WESTENHOUSE

HARTFORD called again on the following Wednesday, but Mrs. Westenhousc was distinctly cool and Elinor was silent. The girl had been told that it was neither right nor nice to go about freely with another man while she was receiving the attentions of Waters.

"But, aunt, I went out only once, and it was in the afternoon," Elinor had replied.

But her aunt sniffed, almost angrily. "I am surprised, my dear. You arc under my care, and I am responsible for you to your father, and I must really beg of you to listen to the few things which I tell you for your own good."

"I am sure I have no desire to disregard your advice, Aunt Cornelia," said Elinor.

Mrs. Westenhousc, in truth, had recognized that Hartford might easily become a rival of Waters, and she had too strongly made up her mind to bring about the match between Elinor and the engineer to look with any degree of

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complacency on the possibility of something else.

And so, when Hartford called, he found his reception cool, and when he offered to take Mrs. Westenhause and Elinor to the theater was told that they were very sorry but that they were engaged.

Hartford knew not what to think, and there was something in the tone and manner of Mrs. Westenhause which made it impossible to repeat his invitation for any other evening.

He was deeply hurt, and when he looked at Elinor for some explanation her eyes were cast down. Then suddenly she lifted them and swept him an enigmatical glance that raised his spirits wonderfully even though the look was untranslatable by any code which he understood.

He gave no sign of his bitter disappointment, and his ease and apparent good spirits conquered to some extent the hostility of Mrs. Westenhause. He rose to go in a moment of triumph while the two were laughing at a repartee, and then—"I hope you have not forgotten that you are to bring your friends to see us," said Elinor.

"Indeed I have not!" He was in an ecstasy of delight from her words, but was wise enough not to show more than friendly pleasure.

A LATE VISITOR

"It is so difficult to find a time when we can all get off. We have already set one evening and found that two of us could not come. Perhaps when we plan it again not even one of us can be here. A newspaper man's time is seldom his own. There are delights in the work, but the uncertainty as to one's hours is not an enjoyable feature."

He made up his mind that he would not call again till he could do so with his friends, and it was several weeks before that could be arranged. Meanwhile he seldom met Elinor, but when he did his manner showed such self-possession and such respectful devotion that, though she could not encourage him, she admitted to herself that he was making himself more and more likable, and she found it increasingly difficult to maintain a manner that was in accordance with the wishes of her aunt.

Meanwhile Waters was a favored guest. Mrs. Westenhouse treated him cordially, and Elinor herself was always pleasant and talked in a way that delighted him. She did not feel, when with him, the shy tendency to silence that came over her when with Hartford.

Waters was a devoted cavalier, and took Elinor and her aunt on drives and to the theater with attentive assiduity. The Washington Bridge, the Speedway, and the splendidly

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beautiful drive along the Hudson toward Inwood were revelations to the girl. She could not but be friendly toward a lover who gave her such pleasure. But at times she reflected that the other, too, would have been thoughtful for her pleasure had he not been checked. And when Waters drove along Riverside Drive and pointed out the fine mansions and spoke of the magnificent view, Elinor thought of the afternoon when she had walked there so happily with Marshall Hartford.

In short, with a perversity which Mrs. West-
enhouse, had she suspected its existence, would have deemed the height of wilful contraricty, but which John Shotterly would have declared to be consistent womanly inconsistency, Elinor gradually found herself thinking more and more of Hartford and less of Waters.

Meanwhile Shotterly was working with tremendous energy in his position as city editor. He seemed proof against fatigue. The middle of the forenoon would see him at his desk, and it was rare indeed that he did not return in the evening after dinner. Knightson used to eye him with those dreamy eyes that saw so much, and he thought he saw signs of irritability, of nervous strain, that were due to more than severity of work. He saw, too, in Shotterly's lengthening office hours a withdrawal from

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home life which seemed significant of unhappy domestic conditions. There was a melancholy menace in the situation. To Knightson it seemed full of sinister threatening.

One day Jenkins saw Mrs. Shotterly and Ward lunching together at the Holland House; and that night, as he and two or three others sat for a little while at a table in Siple's, with Shotterly one of the number, he blurted out: "I say, Shotterly, what's the use of working so hard as you do when there are ways of making so much more money and so much more easily? You know Ward, the millionaire, so well, why don't you take a flier with him?—have him put you on to a sure thing for a speculation?"

"I've thought of that," answered Shotterly; "but, to tell the truth—this is just among ourselves, of course—I never have felt quite ready to put my money in with him. In fact, I've won on the other side. He's a nice chap and all that, but somehow, though I don't know why, and I suppose it's unreasonable, I don't feel like trusting anything to him."

"Oh, of course, if you feel that way." And there was a silence. Then Brierly asked: "Do you find Severn as antagonistic as ever?"

"Yes. I never expect anything but opposition from him. He seems to go out of his way to annoy me, but I don't let him succeed. I go

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ahead with my own department and pay no attention to him."

"I wonder if Mann knows about it," said another of the men reflectively. Mann was the proprietor of the Diurnal.

"Mann? Of course! That's just why he put me in. There is nothing that suits him so well as the chance of putting two rivals or enemies in positions where they are bound to clash."

"I can't see how Mann reconciles such things with his devotion to his newspaper," said Hartford.

"That's because you haven't been here long enough to understand him," said Shotterly. "He's a man whose whole ambition is in his newspaper. There are no rival sirens to whose voice he is tempted to listen. He has neither wife nor dissipation with which to divide his loyalty. He is without diversions and without attachments, except the diversion of running the Diurnal and his attachment to it——"

"But I don't see how all that——"

"It's just this way. He thinks that the men in responsible positions need every possible stimulus to good work, and he believes there is no stimulus stronger than knowing that some one is keenly watching for mistakes. He thinks that Severn will be more apt to do his best work

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from knowing that the city editor is myself, and that I shall be more apt to do my best work through knowing that the managing editor is Severn."

"I begin to understand it better," said Hartford.

Shotterly hurried back to his desk, having eaten but little and that hastily, and Knightson, Jenkins, and Hartford remained a little longer. "I don't like to see Shotterly working at such fever heat," said Hartford. "He seems worried and nervous."

"He's making a splendid success as city editor, and so he doesn't need to be worried about that," said Jenkins.

"No, he doesn't need to be worried about that," said Knightson thoughtfully.

Knightson abruptly rose and went away. He did not like to talk of Shotterly's trouble with any one. The two had long been friends; for years they had worked side by side on New York newspapers, and Knightson had come deeply to like the clever, good-hearted fellow. He knew of Shotterly's many fine qualities, of his generosity, his readiness to help, his good comradeship, his honor, his frankness, his honesty. Indeed, he knew that Shotterly's main fault was extravagance; he knew that he earned a large amount each week, that his wife had

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some income of her own, and that both had fallen into ways of free, even rash, expenditure. But he also knew that Shotterly was perfectly honest, that he always repaid every cent he borrowed (and he borrowed freely), and that he was certain to pay every bill incurred. He knew of Shotterly's loyalty to his wife; and to think of that wife made Knightson very sorrowful, very thoughtful. He thought that Shotterly himself had begun to waver in his confidence.

But in that he was mistaken. Shotterly still felt the most unbounded trust in Zoe. It would no more have occurred to him to doubt his wife than to doubt that the sun would rise. It might rise gloweringly, through mists, but it could be absolutely depended upon. And so it was, in Shotterly's mind, in regard to Zoe. There were ways that mystified him, times when she was fretful, testy, petulant, or when she glowered in brooding silence. He saw that she was under mental stress and he tried to fathom it and help her; but she had irritably repulsed his advances, and gradually the atmosphere of his home had become such that it was pleasanter to remain at the office. In that lay one reason for his long hours of application. When he had worked fiercely and had achieved some victory; when he had planned and successfully carried out

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some brilliant scheme, and when his impulse was to hurry home and enthusiastically tell of it to Zoe; he would reflect on how coldly she would receive him, how apathetically she would listen to him. And instead of going home he would step into some near-by café and either sit alone and drink and ponder, or else drink with some friend and to him tell the story of his triumph; and then he would go back to the office and to work. Why his wife chose to trouble and dishearten him at such a critical period, and when he had won such a great advance, he could not understand.

What he feared was that she was again thinking of leaving him and of returning to her father. He could not understand why—he had been so successful, so thoughtful for her—but he had long ago given up any hope of understanding woman's whims. He merely worshiped his wife, and absolutely trusted her, and stayed away from home for hours when he would gladly have been there. He was, too, under these conditions, beginning to drink much more than was good for him.

Of course the nervous strain could not be without various evidences. Once in a while he surprised the staff by an unwonted sourness; once in a while there was a cutting acerbity that reminded them of Severn; but such manifesta-

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tions were few and brief. He faced the world and his worries gallantly.

From Knightson he shrank away. Some instinct told him that his old friend pitied him, and that he in some sort fathomed that there was trouble in regard to his wife; and when Knightson's eyes rested upon him, though never so gently, it was as if they touched a raw wound, and he quivered. But toward Hartford his friendliness increased. The young man apparently had no suspicion that anything was wrong, and he had not worn away a certain ignorance, a certain unsophisticatedness, which, combined with his shrewdness and a tolerant pessimism, made him a restful companion for the now raw-nerved city editor.

"Look in on us to-morrow night, won't you?" said Shotterly one afternoon. "We'll both of us be glad to see you." The next day was Hartford's day off.

"I should like to, ever so much, but I've arranged to go somewhere with Knightson and the rest of my housemates," answered Hartford. "But if——"

"Well, I'll let you know, then, just as soon as we're settled again——"

"Are you going to move? You surprise me, for I thought that this time you were specially well pleascd."

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"Well, we thought we were; but I fancy Mrs. Shotterly's been getting a trifle dissatisfied with the place, and so we'll get out. Going to move this week. When you are married, Marshall, you'll always be ready to move your home or move heaven and earth to please your wife. And I hope you'll succeed in pleasing her," he added; and into his tone there crept a tang of bitterness that he did not know he was revealing.

"And where are you going this time?"

"I sha'n't finally decide till to-morrow. That's time enough. We've practically got it down to a choice, however, unless another place that we have just discovered suits us better—up on Gramercy Park. The agent was to telephone me this afternoon just what he is willing to do. The janitor, whom I saw, could give me no idea. But I liked the rooms."

At that moment the telephone-bell on his desk rang. "Hallo!" said Shotterly; and in a moment: "Yes, and what will the rent be?"

He received his answer, turned and smiled up at Hartford in amusement, and put his hand over the transmitter so that the man at the other end of the line could not hear. "He says the rooms are twenty-eight hundred a year. What do you think of that? But I'll fix him. I wish you could just hear his tone—sort of weary

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of life, as if he knows I won't take his old place."

He turned again to the telephone. "Are there arrangements in the house for providing for a French maid? Of course I could not expect her to mix with the ordinary servants, you know. You can fix it? That's nice. And is there a livery convenient, where my own horses can be cared for? Right next door, you say? That will be very handy, indeed. And I can have special service if I arrange for it? Yes? How very delightful! Well, I sha'n't decide to-day. I'm thinking some of not taking apartments, but of renting a house on West End Avenue; but if I care to consider your proposition further I shall communicate with you. Thank you. Good-day."

He hung up the receiver and turned back to Hartford with a chuckle of enjoyment. "I always believe in killing off that kind of man. Why, that agent won't get over that for a couple of days. And I can tell you, after this little telephoning, that we're almost sure to go into an apartment up on Central Park West, and as soon as we're settled the latch-string will be out. And you're sure you can't come to-morrow night? It's to be a sort of informal celebration of our moving. We thought of it only this morning and want to have a handful of friends."

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"I'm awfully sorry; but I've told—I've let them know we're coming, and it's really a particular case. If it weren't, I'd——"

"That's all right, Marshall. Just come some other time. I was going to ask Knightson and Brierly also; but I sha'n't, now, for you've told me you are expecting them to go somewhere with you, and I sha'n't tempt them by offering another haystack, for they might possibly stand between. And we'll get along to-morrow night with a few friends, most of whom are not newspaperish but are in outer darkness. And some day, my boy, you will tell me who this 'particular case' is. I've been suspecting there was something of that kind——"

"It's just Mrs. Westenhous and—and an old neighbor—an acquaintance, from Westchester——" Hartford found himself coloring, and Shotterly laughed.

"All right. Don't tell me more till you feel like it."

"And the very first day I can arrange it I want you to call there with me," said Hartford.

"I'll be glad to. I know she's nice. Shall I say I mean Mrs. Westenhous?" he added, as Hartford's embarrassment became more visible.

"It's been impossible, so far, and now we

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four are calling because we all live right there in the house."

Shotterly looked at him with a friendliness that changed to an almost melancholy gravity. "Be sure, my boy, before you give your love and your trust that you are giving them not only to one who deserves them—that, a man may easily do—but to one who really wants them. Be sure on that point. I sometimes think it isn't often enough given its full share of consideration."

The next night Hartford and Brierly tramped up the one flight of stairs to the door of Mrs. Westenhousé's apartments. Mrs. Westenhousé received them with cordiality. She was too wise a woman to do otherwise, for she knew that coldness would be apt to arouse Elinor's sympathy for Hartford and to increase her interest in him. Elinor herself, too, was bright and charming, and there was none of the silence that had marked her conduct on the last evening that Hartford was there. He felt, though, that she seemed inclined to talk with Brierly rather than with himself, and it annoyed him. Mrs. Westenhousé, too, was annoyed by it, but from a correct judgment of its significance.

After a while Knightson came cheerily in. His bearing and his looks impressed Mrs. Westenhousé greatly, now that she was able to see

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what manner of man he really was. He took many a look at Elinor, but self-sacrificingly gave more attention to Mrs. Westenhouse. There was little that he missed seeing, and he had divined that Hartford was in love with this girl, and so he wanted to know just what she was like.

He had, the year before, been assigned to the story of the demolition of one of the Croton River towns to make room for an extension of the New York water-system, and he talked glowingly of it. He had also been into the region on other assignments, and, being a student of Revolutionary history, was familiar with localities of historical note.

All listened with interest as he talked of the Crompond Road and of the days when it was the link connecting New England and the South; of this and of that old mansion; of the real and the legendary lore of the Westchester country.

And then Jenkins came in. He had, at five o'clock, been sent on an assignment to Bloomfield. "I shall have to go to the office pretty soon," he said, "to report on my story and write it out; but it's fortunately one that requires no special haste."

"You'll find only Ridge in charge," said Knightson. "Shotterly went home shortly.

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after six, and said he wouldn't be back to-night."

"Was it an interesting story?" said Mrs. Westenhousc. From a distrust of all newspaper men, she had come to a point where she was beginning to feel a proprietary interest in their paper and their work.

"It was a tragic story," said Jenkins—"too tragic to tell. It'll be bad enough when you see it in the paper; but there you can skip it after reading the head-lines if you don't want to be harrowed. Though I suppose, after all," he added, "that sometimes there's a certain pleasure in being harrowed. And this story followed a pitiful assignment that I had in the afternoon."

"And was that also a kind that you don't want to tell us about?" said Mrs. Westenhousc.

"The story was one that came up in the Yorkville Police Court, up on East Fifty-seventh Street. It was the case of a woman who was arrested yesterday for begging and arraigned in court this morning. The secretary of one of the charitable societies had her arrested because she wasn't a regularly organized charity of any kind—she was just hungry. The poor woman, in court, kept something hidden underneath her shawl; and—well, it was just a half loaf of bread that had been given her

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in her cell. It wasn't too hard or too dry for her, for she was starving."

"Oh!" whispered Elinor.

"But she had two children at home, and she had kept the bread for them, hoping to carry it home if discharged, or to send it if she wasn't. She is the wife of a motor-man who went on strike recently, and who could neither get back with the company nor find work anywhere else; and then sickness came on—but here I am telling a long and mournful story. The court officers and some of the spectators made up a sum of money, and the magistrate discharged her. So you see I finish the story with a touch of happiness."

"We were in the strike riots ourselves," said Mrs. Westenhause, and she turned toward Hartford a look of arch reproachfulness. "You never told anything about the mystery of Miss W. being in the paper. But we long ago forgave you; although, I assure you, for a little while we were very much annoyed."

"Forgave, Mrs. Westenhause!" exclaimed Brierly dramatically. "Is there any one who could feel otherwise than honored by a mention from that distinguished pen which is shedding such luster—" And he made an oratorical pause and waved his hand in a sweeping gesture.

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Suddenly the door-bell buzzed. "A late caller," said Mrs. Westenhause; and Elinor, who had been as gay as the gayest, turned sober and silent, for she thought it was Waters.

The maid went to the door and in a few moments came back and announced Mrs. Shotterly. "Ask her to come right in," said Mrs. Westenhause.

Mrs. Shotterly was agitated, disturbed. She met Mrs. Westenhause at the door of the drawing-room. "May I see you—privately? Pardon my taking such a liberty. I shall keep you from your guests but a moment."

Knightson, from where he sat, saw her face, and it showed that she was laboring under some strong excitement. He did not, of course, hear her words, but the sound of her voice told him that she was under stress of emotion. He rose. "Permit us to say good-evening, Mrs. Westenhause. We have had a delightful time."

The three men rose with him. Mrs. Shotterly slipped into the little sitting-room to avoid meeting them. Knightson murmured to Mrs. Westenhause: "Each one of us is a friend of Mr. Shotterly's. If there is anything we can do, I beg that you will command us freely and in any way."

Then the four friends marched from the apartment and in silence filed down-stairs.

CHAPTER XV

"FUNERAL BAKED MEATS"

STUART WARD went to the home of the Shotterlys that evening, but no one answered his ring, and, looking into the hall, he saw that the elevator-boy was not at his post. Another tenant of the building coming out gave Ward the opportunity to step inside, and he went up to the Shotterly apartments. There he rang the bell at the door, but no one answered, although lights were brightly burning inside. Had he tried the door he would have found it unlocked, but had he gone inside of the rooms he would have found no one.

He went down-stairs and found that the elevator-boy was still absent. This annoyed him, for he wished to leave a note for Mrs. Shotterly, and once before he had made use of the lad. But he heard voices down in the basement—laughter and a buzz of talk—and at once went down the stairway and found himself at the door of the janitor's dining-room.

There were half a dozen people gathered

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about the table, and on it was spread such a feast as surely janitor never had before. There were a couple of capons and there was terrapin; there were artichokes and aspic jelly; there were rolls; there were two bottles of wine. "But they stopped putting any of that on after each of them had slammed on a bottle!" cried Mrs. Danny, the janitor's wife, and at that everybody shouted in merriment.

"I'll begin the story again," said Mrs. Danny, wiping her eyes, for she had been laughing till she cried. "Here's our old friend Meggerby just come in, and he'll want to know it all. On the fourth floor there lives Mr. Cresfield, the actor, and to-night there came a pretty big noise of talking, and says I to Danny, 'The Cresfields are getting out some part for a play'—once in a while they've done that and made a lot of noise. And so we weren't surprised, and we went and listened at the air-shaft for a while, for why shouldn't we get for nothing what we'd have to pay a dollar and a half a seat to hear? 'Danny,' says I, 'that's not the Cresfields, and whoever it is they're quarreling.'"

"I knew all the time it wasn't the Cresfields," said Danny with a great guffaw, stuffing another knifeful of terrapin into his mouth.

"We learned quick, of course, who it really was, and they'd both let go of themselves and

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were saying mighty hard things. They weren't talking so loud, after the first, but you know how it is in these houses when you're at the air-shaft. Still, I noticed that they didn't call each other out of their names. Now, when I get wording it with anybody I believe in giving it hot and heavy——"

"Give 'em the story," said Danny, taking a mouthful of the jelly. He pretended to find it delicious, but in spite of himself his face showed the pretense to be vain.

"I put my head into the air-shaft and looked up," continued Mrs. Danny, "and on every floor I saw the tenants, all with their heads poked out and listening. Well, they had it sharp, I tell you. And we—that's me and Danny and the tenants—found it was something about a late dinner they were going to have, though exactly what they were a-quarreling about we couldn't make out; but all these things we're eating here had come in from the French cook-shop in the next street. Finally he said, well, he wouldn't have it. And she said, then she'd throw the dinner away. And he said it would be the best thing she could do, and told her he'd stood about all he was going to. Then one of them pulled the dumb-waiter up quick, and we all ran to the dumb-waiter doors—us and the tenants on all the other floors—and there they were a-slam-

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ming things on alternate. And at last came one of the bottles with a bang and then the other with a bigger bang."

She stopped, and, as if absent-mindedly, poured a glassful of the wine and drank it.

"But after the two bottles they didn't put on any more."

"Sort of sobered them, the wine did," put in Danny.

"And they slammed the dumb-waiter door shut, and we pulled it down—they might have changed their minds, you know—and you'd 'a' laughed to 'a' heard the giggling from the other floors as it came. And here's the dinner. Ain't it great?"

"What is this terrapin, anyhow?" asked Danny.

"It's turkle," said Meggerby with an air of superior wisdom; whereupon Mrs. Danny told her husband that he must really go out to the Bronx and catch some, for she had never before known that turtle could taste so good.

The elevator-boy, in his suit of livery, was enjoying himself so hugely that it was as if elevators and tenants never were. He had just gulped down a glass of wine and was greedily eyeing the bottle.

Ward watched the group in grim amuse-

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ment. In the shadow, where he stood, none noticed him.

He was fascinated by the eager greed, combined with a grotesque air of epicurism, of the man whom they called Meggerby. "Ah, that's a good thing now! I'd pass that as a good thing," the man said. "The city'd be doing it square if it supplied something like this all the time." Meggerby was dressed in a suit of dingy gray, much weather-worn, and from his words he seemed to be in some municipal employment.

"It's so fortunate that you were able to drop in. Here's three of you came, just by chance, so to speak, and all from different directions, and all in time to be with us at this supper," said Mrs. Danny. "Many's the thing that's come down the dumb-waiter. There's been broken china and flower-pots, and there's been withered flowers, and there's been scrap-paper, and there's been letters, and there's been old hats and clothes and rubbers, and there's been shoes——"

"And garbage," put in Danny, whose orderly mind could not bear to see such an important item of dumb-waiter freight forgotten; but his wife snapped at him impatiently. "Where's your manners?" she exclaimed. "Can't you speak of anything but that?" Danny shrank

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back humiliated, and she went on: "But never before has food that could be eat come down, and never before came wine." She took another sip and smacked her lips in pleasure.

Meggerby also smacked his lips. "This is good, this is. And I wish the city gave it to me every day, I do."

"How were you able to get away to-night?" asked Danny.

"They give me the chance every week or two," he replied proudly. "Some don't get leave oftener than once in three or four months, but I'm a favorite, I am. And I got sort o' tired of the quiet life over there; not but what it was pleasant enough, so long as I could sit and smoke (my nephew always sees that I have a little tobacco) and talk. But I wanted a change and so I was promoted."

"Promoted!" exclaimed Mrs. Danny with polite interest.

"Yes, promoted. The assistant superintendent said he wanted a dozen more men to dig graves on Harts Island, and told me I could be one of them. And I'd never been there, and I knew my health would be better for a little good exercise, and I went."

"Do the paupers do that work?" exclaimed Danny. "I thought they made the workhouse prisoners do it."

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"Where's your manners?" snapped Mrs. Danny again, but far more sharply than before. "Is that your manners to use such words among gentlemen and ladies? I'm ashamed of you, I am!"

Danny, this time deeply abashed, shrank farther back, and Mrs. Danny once more filled Meggerby's glass. She was sympathetically anxious to appease, to soothe him.

But Meggerby, whose eyes were rapidly growing brighter and his cheeks more flushed, was patronizingly indifferent to Danny's words. He emptied the glass that Mrs. Danny had so solicitously filled and said:

"Don't be hard on him, ma'am. It's only that he doesn't understand. I know that there's many that don't understand. You see, it's this way. There's hundreds and hundreds that's at the almshouse that feel down-like and ashamed; but there's some of us that knows better. It isn't the living at the almshouse that's bad (it's better than many a home I've seen), for we're never cold and we're never hungry. And Blackwells is a pretty island, and we can sit there and smoke and talk and play checkers and look at the boats go by; and our friends come to see us there and we keep running over to see them here; and when we're sleepy we go to sleep, and when we're hungry it's meal-time and we get

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plenty to eat. So it's not the living on the island that's bad, but it's the being buried in paupers' field, as they call it. No man's a real pauper unless he's buried in paupers' field—and there I do the burying instead of being buried. He, he, he!”

“And of course you never will be buried there!” cried Mrs. Danny warmly.

“No. I've got my life insured—there's a lot of us has our lives insured for twenty-five dollars or so—just enough to keep us out of paupers' field. And so when I go out there to Harts Island—and the superintendent 'll make me foreman of my gang to-morrow—there's lots of queer things I see, and I always remember that I'm sure not to lie there myself. So don't blame him, ma'am. He spoke hasty-like, and just because he didn't rightly understand. It's an independent man I am. He, he, he!” And he leered triumphantly.

“And what are some of the queer things you see out there?” said Danny humbly, anxious to be again in the good graces of both his wife and Meggerby. The woman only scowled, however, and then, with bustling importance, cut a big white slice of capon and put it on Meggerby's plate.

The pauper leered again. “It isn't just the poor people and the little children that we bury

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out there; it's sometimes men and women that's been well-to-do and that's killed theirselves maybe, or maybe just got down on their luck and hasn't got any friends or money left. It's queer tales we hear from the men who handle the bodies at the Bellevue end. Men that's bought wine as good as this"—he took another swallow—"and chicken as good as this"—he made a single mouthful of a piece of breast—"goes under Meggerby's spade."

This annoyed Danny, who was beginning to turn from subserviency to rancor. He fancied that in Meggerby's words lay a taunt aimed at the people for whom he, Danny, acted as janitor. "There ain't nobody here that's ever going to go under your spade," he declared with some heat. "And this Mr. Shotterly, that bought this wine and these other things that we're eating, he's a fine, free-handed man, he is, with always a good word and a tip. And I'd have you know that he's not one of them kind that goes to Harts Island and the paupers' field."

Ward, at the doorway, had been on the point of sharply calling to the elevator-boy, but on hearing the name of Shotterly he turned and went quickly up the stairway and out upon the street. A cab was passing and he hailed it. "Drive quick," he said peremptorily, giving the

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address of his rooms; and there was that in his voice which made the driver obey.

Ward's mind was in a tumult as he was whirled along. Arriving at his destination he leaped from the cab, handed the driver double his fare, and with swift steps went into the hallway.

"Has anybody been here to see me?" he demanded.

"No, sir; no one at all," said the man obsequiously.

"Are you certain?"

"I am quite certain, sir. I've been here for the last three hours, every minute."

"Some one may call to-night. Whoever it is, or however late it may be, I'm at home. Have them come right up."

"Yes, sir; all right, sir." And Ward went to his rooms and flung himself into a great easy-chair. He was feverishly elated, feverishly anxious. His blood was a-tingle. He had been so terribly afraid that he would lose. And had he lost? Even when she had taken the diamonds it was with a curious air, and he had more than half-expected that she would laugh at him and give them back. Even when he had driven with her there had been a barrier of reserve. Nor had he been with her so often as might have been supposed from the number of times

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that one or another of the newspaper men had seen the two together.

That he really loved the woman—loved her fiercely, earnestly, as he would love the woman whom he would make his wife—had made it all a harder problem. But when he had last seen her, two days before, his pent-up passion had broken through the barriers. He had told her of his love, and she had looked at him with a face that was unreadable to him, and her voice had been hard and cold, and he had gone away with a feeling of frustration, a feeling of doubt, and yet not with despair.

And she? First and uppermost in her mind was the sense of shame. After all, there was a certain inborn strain of honesty, of decency, of straight living, in the Malrose blood. The mayor prided himself on this, and not without reason; and if Zoe had discovered that there was also a vein of wildness, it might be explained on the theory of skipping generations, or by episodes in the mayor's own life, in earlier years—episodes which he had long since tried to forget.

A fierce pride rose in the heart of Zoe; and then with a sorrowful shame she admitted to herself that it was her own carelessness that had laid her open to such words; and with a still more sorrowful gravity she was forced to

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realize that she loved this man—that she loved Stuart Ward. Well, perhaps it was best that this had happened; now she knew that she must see him no more; and the diamonds that she had with such reckless levity accepted—she would return them, and tell John that they were lost. Her course lay clear before her now.

She could not, indeed, look forward to happiness. In the bright light that now illumined the chambers of her heart she saw that there was naught of love for John. She had once fancied that there was; but that was long ago. Was she to blame? Was John to blame? She turned from the problem wearily. What difference could it make! In spite of John's ability, and in spite of it if he were ten times as able; in spite of his cleverness, his good-heartedness, his devotion, and in spite of it all even if his devotion were multiplied manifold, and if his cleverness and his good-heartedness were ten times as great, she could not love him. Now, and for the first time in her life, she knew the meaning of the word.

Something of a philosopher, not a little of a materialist, she had within the past few years pondered often on the problems of human life in the long evenings when she had waited alone, till after midnight, for her husband to return from his newspaper work; for, in spite of a certain

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amount of gaiety and a certain number of friends, she had had many long hours of loneliness. Ideas had come to her of a broader social freedom and of wider possibilities of life; and it was a consequence of these speculations that she had allowed herself to defy some of society's unwritten mandates in her acquaintance with Stuart Ward.

But when the supreme moment had come her pride and the sturdy strain in her blood had upheld her. Though her words were cold and her eyes were cold, her blood was fire, but by not the slightest sign did she let Ward know.

And through it all she had kept one point firmly in mind. She could never be like some women of whom she had heard. Should she ever—(and how she quivered with shame when she realized that her love and her speculations and her philosophy had made it possible to think of this thing which she could not put in words even to herself!)—she should never seek to deceive her husband. She would either be a loyal wife or else she would leave his home. It would be all of life or nothing.

The immediate result of the scene with Ward had been an unwonted friendliness in her manner toward John—a friendliness that seemed almost affection. Somehow, more than ever before, she felt an irreconcilableness, an antipa-

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thy, which she well knew was unreasonable but which she could not help; but in spite of this she forced herself to meet John with an aspect of cheeriness and good-will. It puzzled him, but he understood women too well to seek for an explanation. He was content to look upon it as an omen of the happier days for which he had hoped and worked.

Then the dinner was arranged for, and Shotterly had gone home early, ordering, on his way, the materials for the feast, which he chose with a man's judgment and a man's extravagance, in the little French shop that always stood ready to furnish a wide variety of ready-cooked foods.

And then suddenly, like a storm out of a clear sky, had come the sudden gusty quarrel. Neither of them, in thinking of it afterward, could remember any adequate reason for it, any adequate explanation. A word, a tone of voice, an unguarded look, and in a moment the nerves of both, so sorely and so differently tried, had given way and bitter words had been hurled. It was all so needless, so degrading. Each of them afterward could think of it only with humiliation; but while the quarrel was in progress neither of them could stop.

Mrs. Shotterly noticed that the maid was listening, and she sharply ordered her to take

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the night off and to go to her own home till morning. Pausing briefly till the girl had crept away, the couple renewed their cutting words, and then came the slamming of the wine and the food upon the dumb-waiter. Then, still in a white-heat of anger, Zoe had gone into her own room and Shotterly had gone sullenly to his "den." And before her heat of anger could cool, Zoe had dressed and slipped out of the rooms and left the house.

John did not, for some little while, know that she had gone. He sat for a time sorrowful and ashamed, and his anger began to leave him, and a great pity and a great love took its place. He was a man, and so he must have been to blame or else a woman could not so have quarreled with him. He was a man, and being thus the stronger, he must make the first advance toward reconciliation.

He went to her door. "Zoe," he said softly. There was no answer. Then he called again and more solicitously, "Zoe! Zoe!" only to find that she had fled.

He sat down stunned and heart-broken. There came some one to the door, but it was only the first of the guests, and Shotterly said, with a sudden composure and a natural bearing, that Mrs. Shotterly had been taken ill. "No, not seriously, thank you, but she is asleep, and

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the doctor said she must have rest for a day or so. It was too late to telegraph you not to come. Mrs. Shotterly will no doubt be well in a day or so. In a few days we'll be in our new home, and we hope you'll be our very first visitor there."

The few others of the invited friends came, and all were thus sent away. Haggard of face and trembling, he sat down for a few moments; and then, with recovered composure, went out upon the street. He left the lights burning and the door unlocked, for if Zoe should return in his absence she must not deem herself shut out, and then he wandered about, up and down the streets near by. He thought it possible that she might be somewhere not far away, unwilling to humble her pride by returning unurged, but ready to go back should he find her and ask her.

But nowhere did he find her. He wandered back and forth for a time, and it was while he was thus absent that Ward went to his door and found that no one was at home.

It was typical of Shotterly's loyalty, and more than ever illustrative of his absolute confidence in his wife, that he did not think of the possibility of evil. He thought that she might take a train to her father's home; that she might go to a friend's or to a hotel; and what he feared

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as the outcome was the final breaking off of their relations with each other.

At length he went drearily home and looked through and through each room, feverishly hoping that Zoe might, after all, be hiding. He opened the window and drew a chair up to it, and sitting there, looked up and down the street. For hour after hour he did not change his position, and whenever he saw the flicker of a woman's gown his heart beat fast. Pedestrians became fewer and fewer, and gradually the street grew very lonely. Till morning he sat there. And the gray dawn looked upon a gray and ashen face.

And Ward? He, too, after reaching his rooms, waited; and he waited for the same step for which the other man was listening. As he waited he grew more and more nervous, more and more anxious.

Ah! Some one at last! For there came a soft, slow tap.

He felt shaken as he went to the door. His hand trembled as he fumbled the knob. His voice was curiously hoarse as he swung the door open and uttered a "Come in."

And a shadowy figure that had tried to efface itself against the wall in the dim-lit corridor came haltingly through the doorway.

CHAPTER XVI

A MATTER OF FORTY THOUSAND DOLLARS

THE figure was that of a man, hunched and bent; his cheeks were hollow and his caverned eyes shone feverishly.

Ward looked at him for a moment and then drew away with repugnance. "Oh, it's you!" he said curtly.

"Yes, it's me."

"Well, what do you want?" demanded Ward.

The man partially straightened himself and looked at the millionaire with uneasy scrutiny.

"What have you come here for?" said Ward more sharply, as the man did not at once reply.

"I have heard that you are a merciless man, Mr. Ward," said the bent figure slowly and with a curious halting precision.

"Yes, I am. At least I can be," said the millionaire. He was impatient; he did not know but that at any moment there might be a visitor of a different kind.

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"Mr. Ward—" The words came slowly, yet there was not any real hesitation. It seemed as if this man had rehearsed his brief speech and was groping for the words and uttering them as they came. "Mr. Ward, I am a ruined man."

"Well, what of that?"

"I am a ruined man, and it is you who have ruined me."

Ward laughed softly. It was an unpleasant laugh, and the man seemed to realize, as he heard it, that some special reason lay behind.

"I want you to do something for me, Mr. Ward. I am hungry—I have—eaten nothing since yesterday morning. From you, as the man responsible for my ruin, I ask for some degree of justice." The end of his speech had evidently come to him, and the last few words he delivered with somewhat of fluency.

Ward looked at him with a pitiless face. "Why do you come to me, knowing my character?" he asked.

"I saw you give money to a beggar this morning. I almost asked you for something myself. I was hungry enough, but I want more than you gave to the beggar. Though you are a pitiless man, I have also heard that you are sometimes just."

"I will certainly be strictly just in your own

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case," was the reply. "I will give to you in the measure that you have given to others."

The man looked at him with a rising fear.

"I will show to you as much mercy—but not a particle more—just as much mercy as you showed to Henry Wharton when he gnawed you free from your bonds in the guerrilla prison," said Ward, dropping each word with a relentless enunciation, and actually smiling as he saw the look of astonishment, of fright, in the other's eyes.

"What do you know of that?" cried Zenas Miffin.

"I do know. That is all that is necessary," said Ward.

"But what difference can it make to you? Wharton and I were enemies; we had been bitter enemies for years. What difference can it make to you how I acted toward him?"

"I told you of that merely to remind you of how you treated an enemy. But you treated him unfairly. He had the deepest claim on you, yet you ignored it. But in my own case I have been strictly fair. I have taken no advantage that I could not legally take. You had a fortune—how much was it?"

"Forty thousand dollars. I deemed myself a rich man," said Miffin in a deadened voice.

"You put the money the city paid for your

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house, with all the other money you could get together, and risked it in speculation in which you were sure to win."

The man tried to say something, but was prevented by a passionate agitation.

"I might have saved you. I might have let you win, but I did not. Do you wonder—you who act so mercilessly to your enemies?"

The man shivered. "But we were not enemies," he said.

Ward's eyes flashed. "Not enemies! Have you not even yet guessed what you owe me? It was not on account of Henry Wharton that I ruined you. I spoke of him merely to remind you how cruel you yourself have been."

Miffin looked at him in a desperate silence; though his lips twitched he made no sound. "I am glad you have come to me, for I wanted you to understand. Do you remember a half-starved boy named Ward—the son of a widow—who used to live in Westchester County, and who at times sold you eggs and produce when you kept a store there?"

"Ward?" said the man slowly; "I think I remember the name. Ward? Yes; but I don't understand," he went on pitifully, "why you hate me."

"For many years you have owed me a little balance on eggs," said the millionaire, and his

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lips parted in what was almost a smile. "I have at last taken payment, and with interest."

The man pulled himself together with a sort of dignity. "I am glad that you have explained this. I really don't see why a rich man should remember such a little thing so long." His voice gathered strength. "You seem to have made great effort to recover for a little thing." He was acidly contemptuous.

"It was the circumstances!" cried Ward. "We were all so poor, so hungry, and there was such cruelty in the way you did it."

The man laughed. "Mr. Ward, I would rather be in my place than in yours. I don't remember what the incident was. I am not a man of large affairs, yet I do not brood over trifles. I am glad that you have given me nothing. Had I suspected there was anything personal in your conduct I beg you will believe that I would never have come to you."

Ward looked at him with somewhat of reluctant admiration, and for the first time there came to him a doubt as to the justice of his own severity. Suddenly the bitter hate that he had nursed for so many years seemed to have less foundation than he had ever before supposed. The ancient provocation seemed to dwindle in importance. He felt it incumbent that he justify himself.

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"Had it been only that, I should have been content to let it go," he said, "or to exact a less heavy price. But I knew it was your general character. I knew how you had treated Wharton. I knew you never let an opportunity slip when you could act with selfish greed."

Mifflin drew his coat about him and laughed in Ward's face. "Who are you that you set yourself up as such an upright judge?" he demanded. His anger had brought back much of his strength, and he was no longer the humble and bowed creature that had crept in a little while before. "Have you no sins on your own conscience that you dare be so keen a judge?" His tone was raucous with passion. He moved toward the door.

Ward was struck anew with his dreary, comfortless aspect, and he winced. "You are hungry—let me call my man," he said.

"No, no; I will eat nothing here."

Ward put his hand in his pocket. "Let me give you some money," he said.

Again Mifflin laughed—this time a grisly laugh. "Forty thousand dollars or not a cent," he said.

The two men held each other's eyes for a moment, and Ward recognized in the hungry-visaged Mifflin a stern tenacity of spirit.

"Forty thousand dollars or not a cent," re-

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peated the man; and in a moment more he moved slowly toward the entrance and passed out into the hall, and Ward shut the door behind him. Then Miffin's strength almost left him, and he stumbled and staggered from the building and huddled along the street, mumbling to himself and looking with a fierce longing into lighted rooms.

And Ward, sinking back again in his great easy-chair, tried to call up a sense of self-satisfaction, but failed. The cool intrepidity of Miffin, facing him so brave-eyed, came back to him, and he laughed nervously. "I was on the very point of giving him a check for forty thousand dollars," he said to himself.

He felt shaken and qualmish. "I felt that I had to crush him, but such things ought to be done in the dark, and you shouldn't afterward see what you've been stamping on," he continued; "it isn't pretty." And then: "I once saw a man, whipping his dog, unintentionally kill it. I think I have some idea of how he felt."

Then he forced himself to forget Miffin and to think only of Zoe. He knew now that she was not coming. He knew that the very idea had been madness on his part. She might some time go with him, but she would never go to him. Again and again, in memory, he recalled each look, each word; and then he pondered

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anew on the significance of her quarrel with her husband, following so quickly after his own passionate words of two days before.

"I'll win," he determined finally. "Patience and care, patience and care, and I'll win."

He woke once in the night and found himself murmuring, "I'll win."

The morning came cool and clear, and the sun shone brightly and there was a cheery refreshing breeze. It seemed impossible that on such a day there could be unhappiness for anybody. John Shotterly, looking gloomily from his window, thought of how bitterly ironical nature often is.

The great city awoke—it had never wholly been asleep—and on myriad streets there was the busy turmoil of life, of vigor, of energy. The hundreds that streamed past Shotterly's window—how heedless they were of his heart-break, he thought. And then he wondered how much unhappiness, if he could only know, must be making miserable the lives of hosts of the people who thronged the streets.

Ah! Some one at his door. He hurried eagerly to open it, and there stood Zoe and Mrs. Westenhouse.

"An early call," said Mrs. Westenhouse brightly. "I wanted Mrs. Shotterly to wait longer, but she said she was sure you'd be anx-

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ious. She came to me last night because you were away from home and she had no key, and so I took care of her till this morning."

Her tone was so matter of fact that Shotterly wondered whether, after all, Zoe had told her anything of the actual circumstances.

"It's awfully good of you," he said, and the warmth of his gratitude was apparent; "awfully good. I was really beginning to worry a little, yet I knew Mrs. Shotterly must have gone to some friend's or to a hotel. We are both of us under deep obligations to you. And now you'll stay to breakfast, of course? You won't disappoint us, I'm sure!"

"No, I really can't wait; we took a hasty breakfast before running up here. Mrs. Shotterly was so anxious about you that she wouldn't wait any longer, though. And now, good morning." And she was away; and Shotterly, repentant and happy, and Zoe, also repentant and in a state of defiant ruefulness, were left together.

"I'm going to be good, John," she said simply.

"I'm the one that should try to be good," he said. "I'll never quarrel with you again, Zoe."

They moved in a few days to their new apartments, and Shotterly felt anew the hope

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that there would be a revitalized love in their life.

He was at his desk at the usual hour on the morning following the quarrel, and when Knightson and Hartford and Brierly and Jenkins went in, each looked anxiously for him, and each felt profound relief to see him in his place. And in his eyes there was an unwontedly happy light.

But Knightson, though he said nothing of his fears to either of the others, felt a downcast dread that he could not shake off. He remembered a look he had seen in Mrs. Shotterly's face; he knew the cool relentlessness of Ward. And he looked again at Shotterly, and in his heart there was a great compassion.

As the days passed, Knightson, observing Shotterly with a silent, yearning watchfulness, thought he discerned a certain falling off in his ambition. Sometimes he saw a sadness deep down in the city editor's eyes, and he wistfully longed to help him.

"John, old boy—" He often fancied himself going to his old friend and asking leave to aid or comfort him in his trouble. But Shotterly, gallant and high-spirited, kept a brave face toward all, and more than ever he drew away from Knightson and from the possibility of his offered sympathy.

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Outwardly his home relations seemed more attractive, and he did not so often remain at the office in the evening. He and Zoe were both, in truth, trying to build up a new life between them. Zoe scarcely ever said a sharp word now, and Shotterly found himself moodily thinking that she was acting unnaturally. She talked with him of his work and of what he was planning, and he sorrowfully fancied that her interest was forced by a sense of duty. He would go home early and try to be enthusiastic and natural as of old, not knowing that another face was often before Zoe's eyes.

The events of the night when they had quarreled, and when she had actually run away from him, had made so deep a mark, so cutting a wound, that down in their hearts they realized that they could not look with hopefulness for a happy future. With each there was a sense of a life's disappointment; yet with each there grew up, day by day, a higher and deeper intrinsic appreciation of the other. Shotterly's love never for an instant wavered, but he began to wonder whether it could be right to keep this woman tied to him.

One night he dropped off at the Eighth Street station with Hartford and went over to his rooms with him, and there they had a pleasant dinner together. And then Hartford ran

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up-stairs and asked if he might not bring up his dearest friend, Mr. Shotterly; and Mrs. Westenhousé gave a cordial assent; and in the company of Elinor and her aunt the wearied city editor found a restfulness that was deeply soothing. His worn nerves became tranquil, and his old cleverness and brightness awoke.

He told stories and sang for them with captivating charm, and so bore himself that Mrs. Westenhousé thought she had never met so clever a man. Elinor, too, was delighted, and was proud of Hartford for having such a friend.

And Shotterly was thoughtful for Hartford, too, and divining how anxious he was to shine in the eyes of this young girl, he time and again so turned the conversation as to give the younger man an opportunity to display his own brightness.

Shotterly himself tried to talk of everything else but his paper, but Mrs. Westenhousé and Elinor laughingly kept bringing him back to the subject.

"If you don't want to speak of the Diurnal, then I'll speak of one of the other papers—the Chair"—said Mrs. Westenhousé. "Did you notice what a beautiful story it had this morning about a man who was terribly hurt in saving the lives of four women?"

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Shotterly's eyes twinkled. "That was just something you read in one of the slow papers," he said.

But Mrs. Westenhause did not understand him. "What do you mean about the slow papers?"

"Why, there is a difference in newspapers, you know: some try hard to get the news, and others think that being conservative is quite enough, and so they don't try to get the news. But I think Mr. Hartford can explain the whole matter; he came very near writing the story." And at that Hartford, who had been smiling gleefully, said:

"It was just this way. That story was sent in by an imaginative correspondent at a New Jersey station, and I was the one that Mr. Shotterly sent out there to make a big feature of it. But it was a complete fake."

"A—a fake?"

"Yes, a fake; an invention absolutely. A few of the most conservative papers, so-called, don't go to the trouble of investigation, and so print stories with childish trustfulness. And this was one of the examples. We sent out and found there was no truth in it."

"Is there much faking, as you call it, among the New York newspapers?" said Mrs. Westenhause.

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"Very little," the city editor answered, "except with one or two of the conservative sheets. Almost none that the editors know about. Take the Diurnal, for example. Once in a while a trusted man will be dishonest enough to foist an untrue story on it—for there is a proportion of the dishonest in every profession—but it is very, very seldom. Once in a while there is an honest mistake made. But the paper spares no money in its efforts to make sure. The men know that I would discharge instantly any one who should fake. They know Mr. Severn's attitude is the same. It is the standpoint of any editor worthy of the name in New York. The great newspapers do not spend money without intent just to print unreliable news."

Shotterly did not stay late. "I must be getting along home," he said. "I don't like to make Mrs. Shotterly wait for me so late as she had to do in the old days."

He went away in a breeze of gaiety, and Hartford walked with him to the Elevated.

Shotterly felt a reaction from his blithesome mood, and a gravity stole over him. He sat down on one of the benches on the station platform and let train after train go by as he talked with Hartford. The city editor seemed very wearied, and he was glad to sit there under the

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flickering lights, and thoughtfully smoke and talk with sober, trailizing pauses.

Hartford told him of his love for Elinor, and of what it meant to him; and of a rival in the field, Paul Waters, the engineer.

"Yes, a fine man," said Shotterly; "one of your fellow diners."

And Shotterly spoke hopefully of Hartford's chances, and then in most cordial praise of Elinor, of her good looks, her brightness, and her charm. He was so enthusiastic on the subject that Hartford's heart grew warm with pleasure.

And then, after a longer pause than usual, Hartford said: "Do you remember what Waters said at that dinner and his description of the girl in the valley?"

"Is that really the girl?" exclaimed Shotterly. "Well, that *is* queer! There's the hand of fate in it, Marshall; so don't try to run against fate. And so that's the girl!"

"I specially remember about the old black woman," said Hartford; "Mammy Blackhammer, you know, and what she told him. I've never forgotten that. She told Waters—don't you remember his describing it?—that 'Many waters cannot quench love,' and he thought it referred to a love-affair of Elinor's with a young man of the neighborhood."

"And Waters is his own name, and you are

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the young man. Fate! Fate! That is really strange, Marshall," he added seriously. "That is very remarkable."

"And now that the waters lie between the two sides of the valley, I often think of those words: 'Many waters cannot quench love.' I often think that it means that nothing can permanently part us, and that no Waters can defeat me."

"It's all very extraordinary, Marshall. If I were you I should be tempted to take it as an omen." He reached over and pressed Hartford's hand. "Good luck, my boy."

Then there was a longer pause. It was broken by Shotterly's repeating, musingly and almost to himself:

"'Many waters cannot quench love.' How those old-time fellows knew the human heart! So many of their sayings might have been written yesterday—might be written to-day. 'Many waters cannot quench love.'" And then he whispered to himself: "And I know that nothing can ever quench my love for Zoe."

CHAPTER XVII

THE QUEEN OF HEARTS

It was two or three days later that Shotterly, on his way to the office, stopped off and saw Doctor Medson. He had frequently, when a reporter, interviewed the doctor for his newspaper, and now he turned to him when he needed advice. He had been so absolutely healthy that for years he had not had to see a physician in regard to himself, but for some days recently he had not felt up to his usual standard.

"An early hour for an interview," said the doctor genially. He had met many newspaper men and liked Shotterly very much indeed.

"But I've called for an interview in regard to myself this time."

"Is that so? I'm sorry. What's the matter?" And, as he listened, he regarded Shotterly with a close and kindly scrutiny.

"A bad case of threatened nerves," said the doctor, when Shotterly had finished. "I'll give you a simple prescription; but what you need

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is something more than that. You need restfulness. You're just the kind of strong, full-blooded man that's liable to go to pieces. You ought to do your work with as little worry as possible. Yes, I know, newspaper work can't be done without some worry; but when your work is over you need to go home and just let yourself be soothed and rested. You're married, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"That's good. Well, just tell your wife what I've told you, and let her coddle you up."

(Zoe coddling him! The possibility seemed so funny that Shotterly smiled.)

"You need to go to bed early; to sleep at night and get up in the morning and do your work by day, instead of turning everything topsy-turvy as you've been doing. Can't you have your hours changed?"

"My present hours do not really compel me to work at night very often, as they used to do," said Shotterly.

"That's good. Then get into the habit of early going to bed and early rising for a few months. See the sun rise once in a while."

"I used to be in bed by that time almost always," said the city editor.

The doctor laughed. "Yes, I suppose that's so."

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"And now I'm to try a sort of rise with the lark and with the lark to bed idea, am I?"

"Something of that sort, yes. When you find an old proverb or old saying that everybody knows and believes in, and that our ancestors back for uncounted generations believed in, it's pretty safe to think there's at least a substratum of truth in it. And one of the old proverbs is that of 'Early to bed and early to rise.' It doesn't, of course, need to be taken literally in every case. For my own part I think the habit of going to bed early is deplorable, detestable. I can't understand the mental standpoint. But you're liable to be a sick man, Mr. Shotterly, and must take care of yourself. I don't want to frighten you, for you'll be all right if you are careful, but you must not neglect precautions for a while."

"Sort of a peaceful muffins-and-toast existence, with my feet wrapped up in flannel, tea simmering on the hob, and my wife reading a good book to me—is that it?"

"Pretty much. I think you have my idea. Very little medicine; a great deal of care; all the restfulness for a while that you can get. And if I were you, I should, for a week or two, go out and take a brisk walk or a horseback ride as soon after sunrise as the mist clears away."

Several times, on his way to the office, after

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leaving the doctor, the picture came before Shotterly of Zoe pattering about him and coddling him, and the absurdity of it did not seem nearly so funny as at first. He began wishing that it were not so grotesquely impossible. And he remembered, with an uncomfortable wince, that even that morning Zoc's manner had been very far from what it ought to have been, in spite of her painfully evident efforts to have it otherwise. He wondered if he had not been giving her too much of his company of late; and then he laughed again ruefully as he remembered the doctor's order to have her coddle him. Yes, he had been with her too much, he thought; he must have been annoying or wearying her. It was not a comfortable reflection.

Some important assignments had not been reported upon when six o'clock came, and so he went out to a near-by restaurant for dinner and then went back to his desk. Matters were in such shape that he did not feel at liberty to leave until after eleven o'clock, and then he was invited to join in a poker game at the Newspaper Club. He hesitated. "Oh, come along, Shotterly, you haven't played with us for a long time!" And soon he and three others were sitting in one of the little rooms.

The stakes were small, the limit was low; but

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somehow the totals began to mount, and Shotterly was an almost uninterrupted winner. "Oh, I don't like this at all! I don't want to win anybody's money! Take it back, boys, and let's count beans!" He laughed as he said this, for he knew his proposal was impracticable.

"That's one of the tasks that even Hercules couldn't have accomplished; making a poker game interesting with anything but money," said Brierly. "It's all right, even if it's just pennies, but it's got to be something. Who ever heard of making a serious bluff without money!"

Shotterly began to be much annoyed by his continuous good luck. "Hang it! I don't want your money!" And then he would play again to give the others a chance to recoup; but still luck would not change.

The others at the table, except Brierly, were not from the Diurnal. Streets was one—that ever-changing young man having left the Diurnal and gone over to the Globe.

About one o'clock Hartford came in, and he too took a hand, but like the others was unsuccessful.

At half-past two Shotterly rose. "I'm going to stop," he said. "Some other night I'll give any of you a chance to get even, but to-night I'd just keep on winning."

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The game broke up and Shotterly drew Streets aside. "I say," he said, "I'm an old friend, you know, and I fancied you were a bit down in the mouth to-night."

Streets hesitated. "Out with it, young 'un," said Shotterly; and his voice was so full of kindness that tears came into Streets's eyes. He could stand misfortune stoically, but was not proof against this.

"Making good money on the Globe?" said Shotterly, as the other still did not reply.

"No. I was fired day before yesterday, and—and—I haven't a cent. I haven't even car fare left, and my wife will be sitting up for me hoping I'll come home with good news. And there's a baby coming in a couple of months." All this was blurted out before Streets realized that he was saying it.

Shotterly knew very well that the other had been earning money enough to save sufficient for a rainy day, or, indeed, for a good long rainy season. But this did not seem to him a good time to moralize about it, or to lecture on the good of money-saving and the evil of playing poker. He shoved fifty dollars into Streets's hand. "That's all right; take it as a loan, you know; don't say a word. I'd borrow from you in a minute if I were hard up. And I say, you oughtn't to have been too proud to



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come and tell me you were off the Globe. I need another man on the copy-desk. Just come on at six, will you?"

Streets turned his face away. He tried to speak, but could only brokenly stammer his brief thanks. And then he hurried away, fearing that he should entirely lose his self-control.

It was a beautiful night, and Shotterly said, "Let's walk, boys," as he left the building with Hartford and Brierly.

"I'm glad to quit that game," said Brierly, "and I'll have to get even with you some other time. To-night I'm like the pitcher that went to the well once too often—I'm broke. Walking will save street-car fare and engender habits of thrift and economy."

"Here," said Shotterly, and his hand was in his pocket in a moment.

"No, no. Don't take me quite literally," said Brierly. "I'm not so hard up as that. Only spoke figuratively. Just as much obliged, though."

The three walked slowly, choosing the silent side-streets; the thoroughfares were like deep, silent cañons darkly walled in; once in a while they saw some homeless vagrant creep into a shadowy corner out of sight, and once in a while they saw a solitary policeman. They started

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a jolly song, but it echoed so uncannily that they didn't try a second verse. Each, indeed, was rather thoughtful, and they walked slowly, rarely speaking.

To light a new cigar Shotterly had no match; neither had his companions, and they had just finished their own cigars. "A case of a light that failed, sure enough," said Brierly.

But Shotterly halted beneath a lamp-post. "Fail! Where, in the lexicon of Diurnal youth is such a word? Fail!"

"Going to climb the lamp-post?" said Hartford.

"Behold me!" exclaimed Shotterly dramatically. He wrapped a piece of paper around the end of his cane and poked it up to the flame. "Lucky we're not on the electric-lighted streets," he said. The paper blazed up and he carefully drew it back and lit his cigar. "Either of you gentlemen wish a light?" he said. "All my own idea," he added complacently. "Never saw any one else try it."

There was a guffaw, and a policeman stepped out from a doorway. "Say, that's a new one!" he said. He knew that they were newspaper men. Hotel clerks and policemen never fail to recognize the marks. And, indeed, by more or less intangible signs, almost everybody is sure to make the same discovery. And it is one of

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life's little mysteries, for no two newspaper men look alike, act alike, speak alike.

The three friends lined up and gave the officer a mock salute. Then Brierly looked at the dark doorway from which he had emerged. "Er—you weren't what the poet called a yawnder—or yawning—cops, were you?" he asked politely.

Through mazy Greenwich the three made their way back to Sixth Avenue, and Hartford and Brierly suggested going home and to bed.

"All right, good night," said Shotterly.

"Going to take the Elevated?"

"No, I'll walk out. I'm not a bit sleepy. At least I'll walk to Thirty-third Street or so."

"I'll walk with you," cried Hartford.

"Don't go off alone for a long tramp."

But Shotterly insisted. "I feel as if a walk all by myself will do me good," he said. "That sounds rude, but you know I don't mean it so; I've more than enjoyed this walk up-town with you. But now—didn't you ever feel like thinking things over all by yourself?"

So they left him, and he slowly walked on. Block after block he paced, not tired, or at least not realizing it. His mind was keenly awake and restless. He forced himself to face the problem of how to give Zoe the greatest possible happiness. He sorrowfully came again to the

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point of seriously considering a separation. He reached Central Park and loitered through its pathways for a little, and it was almost daylight when he reached his home.

He was in a very gentle mood now—a mood that was tender and compassionate. Dear Zoe! What could he do to make her happy? And how thoughtless he had been to stay away tonight! How regardless of what Doctor Medson had told him!

He noiselessly unlocked his door and tiptoed in. He went softly to the bedside and saw that Zoe was asleep. Well, he would not wake her. Would it not be wiser not to let her know how long he had stayed away? What good would come from letting her think he had slighted her? And what would be gained by waking her just to explain?

An old-time boyishness came to him, and with a silent chuckle he softly bunted in the pillow as if he had been sleeping on it. Then he tiptoed to the other side of the room and very, very carefully took off his shoes. His coat he quietly hung over the back of a chair. He chuckled again to himself. "What a funny joke on Zoe!" The room was dimly lit, for not only was the first faint gray of morning in the sky, but an electric light from the street threw a glow into one corner.

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Suddenly from the bed came a voice: "Why, John! What are you going away so early for, and without letting me know?"

Shotterly was for an instant nonplused. This was a poser. Then his readiness helped him. Zoe evidently thought he was dressing. "Why, I haven't been feeling well lately, and so I went to the doctor on my way to the office yesterday morning and he told me it would be mighty good for me to begin taking a long walk about sunrise."

Again he chuckled to himself. This was meeting an emergency as it ought to be met. And he hadn't made a misstatement either.

He fully expected Zoe to say: "Oh, don't start quite so early as this! Do come back and go to sleep for a while." He was fully prepared to yield to the adjuration.

But instead, after a long silence, came the words: "I think that's a good idea, John. You haven't seemed to be entirely well lately, but I didn't want to make you nervous by speaking of it. This may be just what you need, and I'm glad you saw the doctor." There was another silence. "I hope you will enjoy your walk, John. You have had too little walking lately, I know, since you've taken up desk work." ("Too little!" thought Shotterly ruefully, and all at once he felt extremely weary.)

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Very slowly he put on his shoes again. Very thoughtfully he drew on his coat. Had Zoe been awake, after all, when he came in? Or had she spoken in good faith? He could not tell.

He stooped over her and touched her forehead with his lips. "Good morning, my dear." How he yearned to have her beg him not to go away!

He went down-town again, taking a surface-car. He got off just below Forty-second Street and went into a resort where he was almost sure to meet some acquaintance. He sat down and called for whisky.

Two well-dressed men were sitting at a nearby table. They were of a type of well-to-do men who love to prowl about unusual places at unusual hours. Shotterly knew one of them slightly—a man named Dawkins. "Won't you come and join us?" Dawkins asked.

Shotterly did so, and the three talked perfunctorily. Then Dawkins proposed poker, and Shotterly, glad of the diversion, promptly agreed. More and more there surged through his mind the suspicion that Zoe knew he had been out all night; that she had deliberately sent him away. The reflection hurt him keenly. He wanted to forget it.

The stakes set were high, but Shotterly care-

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lessly agreed. Should he lose he would the sooner stop playing, that was all. But he did not lose. Hand after hand was dealt, and time after time Shotterly won. He heard another man enter. "Ah, here's a good one to make a fourth!" cried Dawkins. "Come and take a hand, Ward." And he added in an undertone: "I never heard of his making a night of it before. He's too cool and steady a man."

"All right, I'll make the fourth," said the newcomer; and Shotterly, turning, saw that it was Stuart Ward.

Ward was surprised and for a moment embarrassed; but the editor did not notice it, and soon all four were deep in the game.

Still Shotterly's luck held. Broad daylight came, but the men did not stop. The sun streamed in at the windows, and at length Dawkins threw down his cards. "I've got all I want," he said. "I hope the proverb's true, though—'Unlucky at cards, lucky at love'—for I'd be sorry to lose at everything. Isn't that the way you feel, Ward?" Dawkins laughed and yawned good-naturedly as he said this, and did not notice that the other made no reply. His friend stopped playing, too, leaving the game to Shotterly and Ward.

"A curious proverb, that," said Shotterly;

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and Ward, watching him narrowly, wondered whether he meant anything specific.

"I'm bound to win!" cried Shotterly impatiently. "I can't help being lucky at cards today. I wish I weren't."

"Well, I'll quit," said Ward at length, slowly. "You certainly can't help being lucky—at cards." There was a curious look in his eyes.

When it came to a show-down Ward had three aces, but Shotterly was the winner again. "A handful of hearts!" he cried, showing them down in irritation. "Each of the five is a heart!"

Ward smiled, looking boldly into the other's eyes. "See, I have the queen of hearts, though!" he said.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE STORY OF THE DAY

SHOTTERLY did not go home. There was scarcely time to do so and still get to his office by the time he wished to be there—ten o'clock; and, in addition, he felt an aversion to seeing Zoe that morning. It was reluctantly that he admitted this to himself; but as it was he walked over to the Astoria and sat down to a lonely breakfast. And he thought of the dinner-party that he had gathered together there in his effort to keep Zoe from leaving him.

He did not feel either tired or sleepy, but he realized that his temper and his nerves were ready to give way, and so he carefully set a watch on his words. His assistant did not notice that he was in any way different from usual; but the assistant was a man not given to analysis of moods so much as to the study of the possibilities of stories.

The reporters of the staff began to appear shortly after twelve o'clock, and both Knight-

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son and Hartford felt that there was some subtle difference in Shotterly.

But even when it was necessary to censure sharply for failures of the day before, as shown by the comparison of the Diurnal stories with those of the other newspapers, Shotterly kept such a restraint on himself that his temper did not get away from him. He had a number of sharp criticisms to make, too, for it had been an unfortunate day for the Diurnal. Of the other papers the Globe had scored three striking beats; the Sky had two fairly good ones; even the Curule had two, and both of them important; and the slow-going Stick had one. The Diurnal had two important beats, but Shotterly felt that on the whole his paper had been disgraced. "We have a big staff and pay well, and are supposed to have the best men in the city. It's no use thinking of excuses. It's something to be ashamed of, and it must not happen again."

Brierly was one of the men to be reproved, and he had to admit, though he could not even now understand how he had failed, that the Globe had beaten him badly. He ruefully read the three-quarters of a column from the Globe, and admitted that its reporter had secured important details that he himself had missed.

But still the blue envelope was not found in

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any of the letter-boxes. The staff compared notes and wondered.

"Of course he has never been like Severn, but really this is a morning when a few blue envelopes seem to be called for. I'm sure I couldn't have taken exception if he had chosen me, along with some others, for the slaughter," said one of the men.

"When I stood at his desk getting roasted," said Brierly, "I kept an apprehensive eye on that red bucket hanging by his desk."

"What for?" asked Jenkins incautiously.

"Afraid he would use the red bucket instead of the blue envelope for a case of fire," was the dry response.

There was not even a suspension or a fine. "I wonder if he's going to be sick," said Jenkins thoughtfully.

With the coming of the staff Shotterly had found himself ready for the campaign of the day. His brain seemed perfectly clear. No weariness had yet come over him, in spite of his having had no sleep the night before. His work was well in hand, for the news of the morning had been fully digested. A number of assignments could be made immediately; and from suburban correspondents, from reporters throughout the city in charge of various departments; from the Brooklyn and Harlem and

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Jersey City offices; from the Associated Press; from members of the staff who had in their own way secured valuable hints; and now and then from a "tipster," as unattached men are called who nose about for items; fresh news and suggestions for news were steadily coming in.

The great staff, having gathered, were gradually scattered. Some men went by trolley-cars, some by ferry-boat, some by rail, some on foot; they went north or south or east or west. A network of news-gatherers was soon spread over the city, so that every important fire, every parade, every meeting, was covered; the principal criminal happenings were investigated; the city officials could not move or speak without some reporter jotting down the fact; prominent visitors to the city were sought out at their hotels; four longshoremen who had formed a living chain to save a child from the East River were hunted up; the woman who had entered suit against her wealthy husband for divorce was called upon, and, insisting that she did not want either her story or her picture in the paper, promptly gave both; the captain of a steamer that had just come into port after a hurricane experience was interviewed, and he and his storm-beaten craft were photographed. In short, the myriad items that go to make up the news of the great city and

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of the towns that cluster about, were busily being gleaned.

Other departments of the paper were at work also. In the telegraph-room instruments were ticking, and news was coming in from every quarter of the world; but that was not in Shotterly's department, and he would need to know nothing of it until the editorial council should meet.

Sitting at his desk, with every important piece of news covered and with three men held ready in case of any emergency call, a feeling of keen satisfaction came over him. He had won this place by his own ability; he believed that he was holding it creditably and making a success in it. Mann had told him, a few days before, that he should materially raise his salary at the end of the week. Shotterly was, indeed, well qualified for an executive position. He had a knack of handling men, of filling them with enthusiasm, of getting their best out of them. Discharges, under his administration of the city room, had been few. And his old friends had found no change in him, such as is apt to come to a man when new and extensive powers are given and he finds himself in altered relations toward former acquaintances. So Shotterly was justified in his feeling of satisfaction.

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For the past day or so, indeed, things had not gone quite so well; but disappointments must be expected now and then, and Shotterly determined that to-day should show no failures.

But he had little time for general reflections. Scarcely had the last of his men, except the three emergency reporters, been sent out, than a few of those who had been earlier assigned began to straggle back.

Next, the three who had been held were given assignments; and Shotterly gave them good ones to compensate them for their wait. Throughout the afternoon the shift of work and of workers went steadily on, and questions were continually arising that required swift and capable judgment, for if they should be wrongly decided it would mean beats by the other papers.

As the hours passed and Shotterly planned and decided and listened to reports of the returning men and gave them instructions and hints, often illumining a story that the reporter himself had not grasped in its most significant aspect, he began gradually to feel a sense of weariness, of anxiety.

He felt fagged. He wished he had gone home to Zoe that morning. He began to wish the day's work were ended. As the hours wore on and evening approached, he began, too, to

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feel a sense of astonished disappointment, of defeat, for the men whom he had sent out on the most important stories were beginning to come in or to telephone from outlying points, and their reports, almost without exception, were that the stories had "fallen down"; that is, that they had not, on investigation, come up to expectations. When a reporter "falls down" the city editor has at least the satisfaction of calling him to account; but when it is the story that "falls down" the situation is most annoying, for it looks like a case of mistaken editorial judgment.

It was poor consolation to Shotterly that most of the minor stories resulted quite as well as he had expected, for he had not feared a shortage of material to fill a certain number of columns. Every night each great metropolitan paper throws away columns of good material that has cost much money to gather; but a paper is measured by its important news; and it is by the getting of important news and getting it better than do the rival newspapers, that a city editor is judged.

Nothing of striking interest had materialized for the next morning's issue. Knightson, with four men to help him, had been sent to Long Island City on a great murder mystery; but when subjected to critical investigation the

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tragedy resolved itself into an uninteresting suicide. Shotterly had expected the story to be the feature of the paper. Jenkins had been sent to obtain a good interview in regard to the formation of a monetary combination of national importance. A tipster had come in with the story, and the duty of Jenkins was to get some one of prominence to confirm it and let his name be used. But he could not succeed. He found enough to make it practically certain that the story was true, but none of those who were interested in the combination would say a word.

"We can't use the story unless confirmed," said Shotterly; and he suggested the names of half a dozen other men who might talk in regard to it (for he knew the name of every prominent man in every walk of life in New York), and sent Jenkins out again with instructions to find the men at their homes or clubs and to land his story.

Shotterly was determined that the next morning's paper should at any cost be a splendid success. He forgot his morning weariness and plunged into his work with new vigor. His energy transmitted itself to the men; they felt the stimulus of his newly aroused mood, and they felt, too, that for some special reason he was relying upon their success. Jenkins went

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off eager and confident; absolutely sure that before midnight he should obtain the interview that was needed; and for hour after hour he went from place to place, from home to home, not stopping for dinner or for rest. The other men were likewise animated to do their utmost, and a wave of electric potency swept over the staff.

Hartford was one of those whose earlier stories had failed, and when he was given his next assignment he, like the others, felt the stimulus of Shotterly's keen determination.

This time he was to obtain an interview from a member of the Cabinet who had come to New York that morning. Hartford arrived at his hotel only to find that he was just leaving for the train, and that he had told the other newspaper men that he could not say a word for publication.

So Hartford did not send in his card; but he quietly engaged a hansom and had the driver follow the statesman to the ferry by which he was to cross to Jersey City on his way to Washington.

At the ferry-house Hartford's cab entered first, and was driven upon the boat immediately in front of the other, and both vehicles were brought to a stand in the big open tunnel-like space running between the cabins. And then

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Hartford stepped from his cab and to the side of the carriage just behind and said: "I beg your pardon, but I am Mr. Hartford of the Diurnal, and we should like very much to have some statement from you in regard to your visit to New York to-day." His manner was quite matter of fact.

The Cabinet officer was astonished and amused. He had seen Hartford step from the cab and understood how he had contrived the meeting. He barely suppressed a smile. "Didn't I say at the hotel that I wasn't saying a word to any of the newspapers?" he demanded.

"I did not see you there," said Hartford. "I got there just as you were leaving."

And the statesman, after a moment's hesitation, let the smile come, and then gave Hartford a good interview; not, indeed, in regard to his trip, but still a talk that would read well next morning and that would be of especially high value through its being an exclusive.

But when the daily editorial council of the Diurnal gathered, just before six o'clock, Shotterly had not received any of the important favorable reports. The outlook was still most unsatisfactory. Mann, the owner, was present at the council, with Severn and Shotterly and the chief editorial writer, and two or three oth-

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ers of those holding the most important positions.

Shotterly could only say, in regard to the city department, that though he was confidently counting on a number of good stories coming in later, they had not yet done so.

Mann rather curtly expressed disappointment. "I particularly wanted to see several good city stories to-morrow morning," he said. "There are a good many hours yet before we go to press."

"I still hope that some good stories will come in," the city editor repeated quietly, putting a restraint upon himself, though he fancied that Severn looked triumphant.

"You have over forty men—fully forty-five, have you not?" said Severn. "I mean, including department men. Doubtless some two or three of them will get something in." There was a tinge of sarcasm in the tone.

"After all, I can not invent or manufacture news," said Shotterly with acerbity.

"It can sometimes be dug up, though, when it doesn't lie on the surface," said Severn.

Mann broke in with a comment on the telegraph news, thus cutting off a retort that was on Shotterly's tongue, and in a few minutes the council broke up, with Shotterly in a heat of anger and of keener determination to win.

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He sent a telegram to Zoe saying that he was unavoidably kept at the office by work, but should hurry home at the earliest moment possible. He was not hungry, but went out and ate a little, and at the same time took two glasses of whisky. He stopped with that, for in every way he was determined to keep a check upon himself. He was beginning to be tired, but was in a fever of resolution to succeed. Every man who came in to report felt the thrill of his spirit; every man who was sent out went off in the confidence of getting his news in spite of any obstacle.

Shotterly looked over at the copy-readers' table, or "copy-desk" as it is called, and saw that Streets had come in and was sitting there, waiting for the head of the desk to give him a story. The work there was just beginning. The city editor stepped toward the desk to speak to Streets, and as he neared him he saw that the young man had suddenly fixed the eyes of every other one of the copy-readers.

Streets was taking out with elaborate care twenty-five long, new pencils, each sharpened to a long sharp point, and these he was laying in a row beside his pile of copy paper. With a flower in his buttonhole, with his finger-nails polished to exceeding brightness, with his waist-

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coat of English plaid, with horn buttons, he presented an extremely spruce and natty appearance; but when he began to lay out that row of pencils the others could not stand it. At a signal from the chief copy-reader they all arose and then marched, every one of them, in solemn file, from the room and to the nearest café, where they drowned their feelings, and then marched solemnly back.

While they were absent Shotterly spoke to Streets with kind cordiality, and the tidy little chap forgot his flower and his pencils, his clothes and his looks, forgot the good-natured raillery of the copy-readers, and looked up into Shotterly's eyes with warm devotion.

"I didn't thank you as I meant to—" he began; but Shotterly interrupted him. "Tut, tut," he said, "none of that."

An hour passed. An office boy came to the city editor's desk. "Mr. Welkins, the tipster, sir, wants to see you."

"Have him come in," said Shotterly. The tipster appeared. "Got a good story?"

"Yes, and I want a hundred dollars for it. It's a corker."

"What's the story?"

And Welkins told it succinctly with no waste of words. "Isn't it worth a hundred dollars?" he said.

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Shotterly had listened intently. "Exclusive, of course?"

"Sure!"

"I'll give you seventy."

"Can't do it. I'll take it to the Globe."

Shotterly smiled. "That's all right. I'll take it if it pans out. Come in to-morrow and you'll get the hundred dollars." He was more anxious to get a good story than to beat the tipster down. "Do you know who will confirm it?"

"Dawkins, the club man. You know him, don't you? He knows about it, and will talk if you let him know you already have the information."

"All right, we'll land the story some way."

Then Shotterly hurried into Mann's room and told of the story with an enthusiasm that almost amounted to excitement. "He's one of the most-talked-of men in the city just now, and is prominent in that big deal that Jenkins is trying to land. This will make a tremendous sensation. I'll send Hartford out on it with three men, and it'll be two columns, easy, without the pictures." His eyes were aglow. "I knew the good stories would begin to come in."

He went back to his desk and called Hartford, who had come in just a little while before

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and was swiftly writing out his interview with the Cabinet officer.

“Drop that, Hartford. Just hand it over to Brierly to finish; tell him the rest of it, quick. And then get right out on this new story and take three men with you. Round up every end of it. If you need more men telephone me and I'll send them. Follow the couple—see relatives and friends—and most of all find who the woman is, and don't spare expense in getting her photograph and getting it quick. Find who she is, quick. And let me know, quick. Just hustle and hustle! This'll be the big story of the day! And when you see Dawkins, just fix him so that he won't let any other paper know. He's sent us tips himself at times, and I think he's working this with Welkins, and if another fifty will keep him tight let him have it. And remember, the story's mighty little good without the woman and all about her. Get the woman first!”

Aglow with eagerness, for never before had he been trusted with the story of the day, Hartford sat down with Brierly and swiftly gave him notes of the remainder of the interview with the Cabinet officer. And, while he was thus engaged, Severn came into the room, and with a new and singular look on his face walked toward the desk of the city editor. Two or three of the

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men glanced at him curiously and then bent again over their work. Severn stopped beside Shotterly and nervously cleared his throat.

"Mr. Shotterly——"

"Yes." The city editor looked up.

"Don't send out on that story, please. I don't think it's just what we want, and there's a special reason——" He stopped, visibly embarrassed.

Shotterly laughed. "Oh! so Mr. Ward is a friend of yours, is he? Or perhaps you think the woman may be——"

"Don't—don't say that, Shotterly," said Severn, his voice quivering a little. "We needn't get this into personalities. Please don't send out on that story." His voice was unusual and his face was very pale; but Shotterly, fevered and fagged and weary in body and brain, saw only that the managing editor was trying to spoil the story of the day. "Don't send out," repeated Severn.

"I will!" snapped Shotterly. "I will! It's a good story, and it's an exclusive, and I'll have it!—Mr. Hartford!" And Hartford stepped up to the desk. "Hurry right off on this. Every minute is precious. Remember, I want not only an outline, but enough for a big story."

"Mr. Shotterly," and the managing editor's voice had an odd sound, "you should know that

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I would not ask this if there were not a strong reason. And I'll see to it personally that none of the other papers will use it even if they get it, so you won't be beaten."

But Shotterly still did not heed, did not even notice Severn's pale face and the strange note in his voice. "I'll send out on the story," he said. "Nothing but a positive order from Mann could stop me."

"He's just gone away," said Severn.

"And the men have gone too," rejoined Shotterly, for at that moment Hartford and the other three left the room. And Severn, seeing this, turned, and without another word walked slowly off.

Several of the men had noticed that there was a controversy between the two editors, and the effect of the low-voiced colloquy was curiously to charge the atmosphere with unrest. It was as if some subtle disquieting influence were at work. The whining of the electric fans suddenly became noticeable, the buzz of the telephone-bells all at once became an annoyance—not a man in the room but felt unsettled, restless, nervous.

An hour passed, two hours, and Shotterly became keenly impatient, for he did not hear from Hartford. Other stories began to come in—good stories and in abundance—and there

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was now no longer actual need for such a feature as the story that the tipster had brought; but Shotterly felt it as a point of personal pride that he must have it after his disregard of the appeal of the managing editor. He became more and more impatient as Hartford still did not telephone his progress.

At length Hartford came back. He came into the building slowly; he was sorely shaken and his face was strangely white. He did not go into the city room, but by another entrance into the office of the managing editor.

Severn looked up at him in grave and anxious inquiry.

"Well? Is it true?" said Severn.

"Yes," Hartford gulped.

"It came to me by a private source just before you went out," said Severn.

The two men were silent. "I've reported on it by telling you," said Hartford; "now I'll go home."

"You can't go home till you've reported to your city editor," said Severn curtly.

"I can't—oh, I can't!" exclaimed Hartford brokenly. "You tell him, Mr. Severn—please do."

"My boy," said Severn softly—and as Hartford looked at him he saw the old stern mask fall away and a gentleness steal over his fea-

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tures—"I know you are his friend, but for that very reason you must tell him. Nor am I his enemy. I'm not the cold-blooded man you all think me—it's the driving work of all these years that's given me that manner. And I'd do anything to help Shotterly to-night—anything. But don't you see I'm just the one that can't? Don't you see that what would be kindness or sympathy from anybody else would seem the grossest insult from me—that it would seem as if I wanted to deal the blow? I'd take this load from you if I could, but you'll have to learn that there are burdens that are not transferable, and this is one of them. You'll have to tell him." His voice was very, very gentle, and his face still had that curious look as if a mask had dropped away.

"I can't—oh, I can't!" repeated Hartford miserably.

And then into the room stepped Shotterly. He stared at Hartford in a sudden anger, but his words were cold and measured. "Do you know how anxious I have been to hear from you? And do I need to tell you that when I assign you on a story I expect you to report to me and not to some one else?"

Both Hartford and Severn were silent, and a miserable something in their faces struck Shotterly with a sudden sense of terror. He

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was frightened, yet he knew not of what. He felt that there was something fearsome in their silence.

He leaned against a chair. "I—I think I'm a little dazed. Is there anything—" His voice was uncertain and shaky in spite of his tremendous effort to retain his self-control. Their white faces and their silence struck him with panic fear.

Severn slipped from the room and Hartford threw his arm about his friend's shoulder. "John—John——"

An awful suspicion was slowly ripening in Shotterly's mind.

"Who was the woman that went with Ward?" he whispered.

"John, John—don't ask me. Be brave, John——"

Shotterly sat down in a sort of huddled way on the chair. His face was suddenly bleak and drear. "It's a lie!" The words came in a sort of thin whisper—the whistling whisper of an old, old man.

"I—I'm going home," he said blindly. Then he tried desperately to pull himself together, and his words came boggingly. "There's some mistake. Zoe will clear it all up. I—I'm going home." He repeated these last words very softly to himself and then unsteadily arose.

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"May I go with you, John? Let me go with you—please do. You need a friend to-night, John."

But Shotterly only looked at him absently, and then moved toward the door of the city room. "Don't go out there! Let me get your hat!" cried Hartford. But Shotterly, with his head bravely up, his shoulders straight and square, walked out into the room and steadily across it, but his face was as the face of the dead and a deep silence fell upon the men.

"I'm going—home," he said to the night city editor. "I won't be back—" The words fell drearily, curiously steady. And then in the midst of the silence he walked to the door and disappeared.

Hartford went with him as far as the Elevated, and at the foot of the stairs Shotterly, still so terribly white, so terribly moved, said:

"I'm going home—I want to see Zoe—to see Mrs. Shotterly. There's been some mistake, you understand, and it will all be cleared up. And—report to Mr. Severn about the story and ask for his instructions. And—and give him my apologies. But let him know it's all just a mistake; just—just a mistake."

He stumbled up the stairway like an old and debile man. "I'm going home," he whispered to himself; "I'm going home—to Zoe."

CHAPTER XIX

THE COMING OF MAYOR MALROSE

THERE was no account next morning in any of the papers of the story of Ward and Mrs. Shotterly, nor did any appear in the days that followed. Severn personally requested of each paper that the story be not published, and the editors promptly agreed not to touch it. Shotterly was widely known and was liked by every one who knew him, and besides, the sense of brotherhood among the men of the profession kept the newspapers from handling it when the situation was explained.

As the story sifted gradually through various circles, surprise was often expressed in regard to the supposed ignorance of the newspapers, and several acquaintances of the millionaire took pains to put newspaper men in the way of getting the particulars; but still the story did not appear.

The tipster who had taken it to the Diurnal was amazed to see nothing of it in print. He called promptly and sent in to Severn a demand

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for his money, and it was paid him, but without any explanation. On the second day, seeing that it was still untouched, he made the rounds of the other newspaper offices offering the story; but in every case he was met by the indifferent statement that they knew all about it and didn't want it.

On the morning following the disappearance of Mrs. Shotterly and Ward, Shotterly did not appear at the office, and Severn sat at the city desk and took up the work. He was apparently the Severn of old—curt, sharp, hard, and critical. Assignments were given out, and men went to and fro, and stories were turned in, and the great staff steadily worked, just as if no tragedy had come into the life of the city editor whom they loved.

But beneath the brusqueness of his manner, Severn was anxious and compassionate. He called Hartford. "Go up and see Shotterly, won't you? Charge your time 'o the paper," he added with a smile.

"I've been," said Hartford. "I was there this morning; but if he was home he wouldn't answer. Knightson was there, too."

"Well, suppose you just go up again. Maybe you'll get him this time."

And so he went again, but still no one would come to Shotterly's door. And when Hartford

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called through the panel: "Won't you let me in, John? It's Hartford," there was still no sign. The hall-boy said he was pretty sure Mr. Shotterly had not gone out.

Several days passed and still Shotterly would not be seen. Hartford and Knightson kept trying to find him; but he would answer no notes, he would see none of his friends. And one day Hartford learned that Shotterly had vacated the apartments, had sent all his goods to a storage warehouse, and had left no address, had told no one where he was going. None of the staff, covering the entire city among them on their varied assignments, and going into all quarters of it at almost all hours of the day and night, either saw him or heard of him. It began to be believed that he had left New York.

Mrs. Westenhause heard of the story at the next meeting of the whist club and was deeply grieved. And her first thought, after the sense of sorrowful surprise, was of pity and concern for the husband.

Near the end of the second week Mayor Malrose appeared. He had written an important letter and had received no answer. Then he had wired, and the telegram had been returned. So he took a train for New York, and on going to Shotterly's address, could only find that the household goods had gone to storage; and from

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the hall-boy, whom he plied with questions, he received such a sinister intimation that he was staggered and appalled. Then he went to the office of the Diurnal, and found that Shotterly was not there. The office boy (it was the same who had first met Hartford so long before) asked him if he wished to see Mr. Shotterly personally, or if any one else would do.

"How soon will Mr. Shotterly be in?" asked the mayor.

"I don't know, sir." The boy saw that the visitor was agitated, and so he did not volunteer information in regard to the city editor's not having been there for nearly two weeks.

"Let me see some close friend of his," said the mayor; and the boy asked him inside and set a chair for him, for Malrose, once so self-sufficient, so pretentious of manner, was weak and trembling. The lad sought out Hartford. "There's an old man wants to see Mr. Shotterly. I think it's his father. Anyway, he's all broke up. And then he said he'd see his friend."

"I'll go," said Hartford. And he stepped to where the boy had left Malrose waiting.

Malrose arose and seized Hartford's hands in a close grasp, and his voice broke pathetically as he said: "My dear sir, I remember your face perfectly as a friend of John's, though I don't just recollect—Mr. Hartford, you say? Yes,

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of course. And now, I've been rather anxious on account of my son-in-law moving and forgetting to send me his new address; and if you—" He stopped and eyed Hartford with wistful anxiety, and the assumed confidence of his voice departed and the last of the words dropped off in a sort of excited mumble.

Hartford's eyes were full of deep commiseration. "My friend Shotterly—" He stopped.

"What has happened?" demanded Malroso hoarsely. "Where is my daughter?"

"Come into this other room," said Hartford. And there, without looking at the twitching face of the father, he told, in as few words as he possibly could, the tale of what had happened.

"And has any search been made? Any—" The mayor could not command himself to speak further.

"No, there was no one who had the right to order it so long as John himself did not appear. For our own part we, his newspaper friends, have done everything to keep it quiet and to avoid publicity. We thought that was what Shotterly himself would like."

"And—is there any doubt?"

"None," said Hartford gravely.

"And this—this man—Ward?"

"He is back in the city. In fact, I heard of his being seen here just a few days after Mrs.

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Shotterly disappeared. He is an active operator in stocks, but has never kept an office in Wall Street, and has conducted his operations largely from his own rooms. This has made it easier for him to keep his movements quiet."

"Where are his rooms? I'll go to him—I'll demand my daughter! I'll go to him!" He started away in a glow of passion, but at the door a weakness again came over him. "I'm an old man," he muttered, "a weak old man. I'll be stronger in a minute." Again he started to go. "I thank you, Mr. Hartford. This has been a—a very painful matter to ask about." He paused and then spoke uncertainly: "You are a friend of John's—and I am not altogether myself. Would you mind coming with me to this—this man?"

Ward was not in, and the two sat down in the reception-room and waited. At length he came, and, cool and composed, but with a whitening about the lips, met and faced the sorely smitten father and listened to his denunciation. But he refused to say a word of Mrs. Shotterly. "I know absolutely nothing about her," he declared. "This is all some strange misunderstanding."

"Mr. Ward," said Hartford firmly, "I know, and you know, that you are speaking an

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untruth." But Ward merely shrugged his shoulders.

"Tell me, if you have any human feeling within you, where I can find my daughter!" cried Malrose; but Ward, with an attempt at bravado, again declared that there was nothing that he could tell. "Come up to my rooms if you want to and if you think I'm hiding anything," he said.

And the two men, though they did not for a moment think that Mrs. Shotterly was in the building, went with him; and inside of the rooms the mayor called firmly and lovingly: "Zoe! Zoe! If you hear me, come to me!" And there was a heart-break in his voice.

Then he appealed again to Ward, and Hartford indignantly seconded him; but the appeal was vain. The cool, stern face was unrelaxed.

And Malrose, with a certain dignity of despair, said: "There is nothing for me to do here. Mr. Hartford, please help me to get away from under this man's roof." He took Hartford's arm, and together the two went away. Then the young man, noticing his incertitude of manner, asked if there were friends to whom he was going.

"No, I wish to see none whom I have known," said the mayor. "I will merely hide away somewhere."

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"Come with me to my rooms," said Hartford. And there was such genuine kindness in his tone that the mayor went with him. Hartford got him to the easiest chair, and he sat there brooding, with his eyes cast down, and now and then shaking his head and whispering to himself. And Hartford went up-stairs and asked for Mrs. Westenhause. "I know I am taking a liberty," he said, "but I've come to ask you to help me." He told of Mrs. Shotterly's father being with him, and said that he did not know but that the mayor might be sick or need help; and, in short, would not Mrs. Westenhause come down with him and speak with Mr. Malrose and see if there were anything that could be done? And Mrs. Westenhause, her heart full of pity, did so, and her presence brightened and calmed the trembling man and soothed him.

"If this had been to-morrow," she said to Hartford, "you would not have found me. Miss Wharton and I are going up to her father's for two or three weeks or so. And I am going to ask Mr. Wharton to let me bring her back with me for a long, long visit. I am getting to be a lonely woman, and it has been a great brightening of my life to have her with me. I don't want to be selfish, but I do want Mr. Wharton to divide Elinor with me and to give me at least half."

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After a while Malrose went out again and Hartford accompanied him, and together they inquired in various quarters; and then Hartford took him back to his rooms—or rather, this time, to the rooms of Mrs. Westenhause, where both Elinor and her aunt did their utmost, unobtrusively, to soothe him and make him comfortable. Then Hartford went about among clubmen and men about town, and, explaining why he asked, tried to learn something of Mrs. Shotterly's whereabouts. But it was all in vain, and it was late when he returned and reported his lack of success. He insisted upon the mayor's staying all night with him, and the broken old man gratefully accepted the offer.

"Come up in the morning and tell us how he is and if there is anything at all that we can do," said Mrs. Westenhause. And so, the next morning, Hartford went up and told them that the mayor seemed more composed and more able to bear his troubles; and Mrs. Westenhause slipped down-stairs to see him, and left Hartford to speak for a few minutes with Elinor.

Hartford's love for her leaped up within him more intense than ever before, and he found himself suddenly plunged into a passionate declaration of his devotion. As she stood before him in her young beauty, he could not restrain the expression of his love.

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She listened, shy, hesitating, almost carried away by his fervor. He could scarcely, indeed, have chosen a better time, for this great trouble had brought to him a deeper, graver manliness, and had given an additional firmness, an additional strength, to his bearing; and now his kindness toward Malrose, his unassuming sympathy and helpfulness, had touched both Elinor and her aunt.

Hartford saw from Elinor's manner that his words were at least not displeasing to her. He almost dared to hope that she would tell him what he so dearly wished to hear; her sweet shyness was delicious.

"Do not answer me now, Elinor, if you hesitate in even the slightest degree. I feel that I must tell you that I love you. I have loved you since I first knew you. I shall love you all my life."

"I—I don't know what to—" Elinor stopped, and a blush swept over her face and neck. Under the spell of his presence, and having for weeks past felt a growing interest in him, she could scarcely refrain from saying that she loved him; but she was checked by the reflection, which even in such a moment she could not ignore, that another man was still paying his court to her with the approval of her father and the willingness of herself. Her sense of

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womanly fitness told her that she had no right to give her love to Hartford while the suit of Waters was on such a basis.

"I will ask you again when you return, Elinor," said Hartford, with fond pride, as he looked down at her. "And I feel that I am sure to win. I am not superstitious, Elinor, and you will laugh, I know; but old Mammy Blackhammer, on the day that I left the Westchester country, said something that has been a great comfort to me, a great encouragement, for it seemed to mean that I shall win you no matter what obstacles may come. And the proverb that she quoted has stayed with me as a promise of hope."

Mrs. Westenhause came back and gl-ned from one to the other but said nothing. But some time after Hartford's departure she spoke of Waters, and said that some day Elinor would, of course, make up her mind in regard to him.

"And always remember, my dear, that a girl with tastes for the good things of life ought to marry money and position. Not, of course, if she distinctly dislikes a man; but otherwise, the sensible way is to marry one who, like Paul Waters, has an established position and profession and is earning a great deal of money, and who, in addition, is of high character and is

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bright and pleasant and agreeable. With qualities such as his, reenforced by money such as his, his wife will be a happy woman. And I speak to you from the standpoint of middle-aged experience when I say that a girl makes a mistake if she lets herself think that she can be happy with nobody but some particular one. The fact that women wait for men to speak, and then take the one that does speak, shows that they have the capability of being happy with some one besides the one they may first think of."

But then she thought of her own girlish love for Mr. Westenhause, and of how little money he had when they were married; and she sighed as she looked at Elinor, standing flushed and silent, and it was with a sense of compunction that she said: "After all, dear, it is your own feeling that must tell you what to do, and I am a foolish old woman to talk of worldly wisdom to you. But it would please me very much if you should accept Mr. Waters, for I am sure you would be happy."

They took a train to Elinor's home that afternoon, and in the evening, as the girl sat on the veranda and looked off at the great lake that filled the valley in front of the house, she thought of Marshall Hartford and of how he had waved a good-by to her.

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Suddenly Waters rode up and called out a cheery greeting as he dismounted. "How glad I am to see you here!" he said. He had known they were to be there the latter part of the week, but had not been sure as to which day; but being at the station at Purdy's late that afternoon, the station-agent had chanced to mention that Miss Wharton and a lady, a stranger, had arrived a half hour before.

"How does it feel to be home again?" he said to Elinor. "Isn't it good to find that every one is glad to see you back?"

"I am very glad to be home again," she said.

"And I suppose I'm selfish; but I'm awfully glad you've run up here, and I hope you'll let me see you often, and that we may have some drives together."

They sat and talked there, and after a while Mr. Wharton and Mrs. Westenhause went inside, and Elinor and Waters were left together; and the moon shone beautifully down and silvered the sheet of water, and his mind turned to loving thoughts.

"I want an answer from you, Elinor. You don't know how I have been longing for it. I thought I could be patient—and I can be if I must—but it is hard to wait, Elinor. It is hard to feel an uncertainty, for I love you so."

"Oh, don't, please don't to-night!" she cried

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pleadingly; and he felt hurt, for it seemed as if some new barrier had arisen between them. She turned toward him and smiled, but there was doubt in the smile; she was embarrassed and troubled. And he said:

“I will not ask you again for a while, Elinor. I see that I must really be patient. But I shall be entirely hopeful of the future. Do you blame me for feeling sure that you will let me come to you? And I must tell you something. I am not superstitious—at least I think I’m not—but I have never forgotten what was said to me down in this hollow—it was a hollow, then—right in front of us, just before I flooded it. It was that old negro woman, the old slave; she quoted an ancient saying that I have ever since held close to my heart. Often and often it has given me new confidence, and I have needed the confidence of late, for I have fancied that you were almost slipping away from me.”

He did not understand her look, nor what for a moment he fancied was a tinge of amusement. “And so—so it is a saying of old Mammy Blackhammer’s that—” He did not guess that she felt an hysterical desire to laugh.

“Yes, I had just been deeply impressed by you, Elinor, as you stood there—just below where we are now—do you remember? And then it was that the old woman spoke.”

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Her face glowed a faint red, for she knew that at the time which he was recalling she had been thinking only of Hartford, on the other side of the valley. "Yes, I think I remember," she murmured.

"I know now that I loved you even then; but at that time I did not know it. But Mammy Blackhammer knew it."

"And—and—what—" Elinor's voice trembled ever so little; but Waters could never have guessed that it was because he was not the first to tell her that day that the words of the old black woman had given a confidence of successful love.

"What did she say, do you mean? It was, 'Many waters cannot quench love!' And if you could have seen her and heard the tone of her voice——"

"But—but, Mr. Waters"—and there was now an unmistakable smile at the corners of her mouth, a smile that was charmingly demure, and which showed that she was bubbling over with some mirth-provoking thought—"wasn't that—the using your name, you know—wasn't that rather doubtful in meaning?"

He laughed, and she laughed gaily with him. It keenly amused her that these two men, each so sane and so sensible, should confess to being so influenced by the words of an old woman;

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and she was in a fever of wonder, of excited amazement, to know how it could have happened that both of them were affected by the same words.

Elinor and Waters took a long drive together the next day, and they went through lovely lanes and into a queer old town where there was an old-time academy on one side of the single street of the place, and a row of old-time homes and almost deserted shops on the other, and where there were a pretty brook and a great balanced rocking-stone, and being thus alone with her he did not, after his experience of the night before, risk spoiling the drive for her by talking tenderesses. But when, returning, they neared her home, he said: "It seems so good to be with you on these fascinating lanes. It makes me realize how happy I should be if we could jog on together forever."

But she did not answer, and her face was very thoughtful, very grave. Her mind, in truth, was full of Hartford. It was right over there—she could see the spot from where the carriage was when he told her this—it was there, in that meadow beside the Croton, that Hartford had sat beside her on the grass on that day last spring when his love had almost been uttered and when she—yes, she knew it—might have welcomed it. Should she say Yes

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to Hartford now? Or should she say it to this honorable, successful, companionable lover beside her?

The next day at breakfast Mr. Wharton began to take alternate bites of breakfast and bits of news, for this was his time for reading his New York paper. But he had not much more than looked at the paper when he forgot his breakfast and read eagerly.

"What's the interesting news?" said Mrs. Westenhause.

"Ward, the millionaire, has been attacked in his rooms, robbed, and badly hurt!"

"Who did it?" cried both women simultaneously, with such keen interest that Wharton looked at them in surprise.

Then he read the story aloud. It told of how, the night before, Ward's valet, returning from delivering a message, had found his master lying on the floor unconscious.

Help was at once called, and Ward was found to be only stunned. He said that some one must have struck him from behind, that some one must have been secreted in his rooms and crept out when his valet went away. He was certain that it was not the valet himself, for he had seen him go out of the door and had then remained seated where he should have known had the man returned.

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And then he found that securities amounting to over \$900,000 had been stolen. They were mostly non-negotiable, indeed, but were of vital importance to him.

He had taken them from the safe in the room to examine them. Having no office in Wall Street, and conducting his business in unusual ways, he often had money or securities by him, but had never before had such an amount as this. He had got the securities together on account of needing the actual papers in his hands to complete a great deal which he had been engineering, and which was to be completed in the morning. He had been looking the securities over, and the entire amount was on the table before him when he was struck. And there was not a trace of the assailant or of the securities to be found, though an army of detectives were at work. There was much doubt felt as to robbery having been the motive. It was suspected that the assailant had entered the rooms to attack Ward and had picked up the securities merely because they were temptingly there in plain sight, and had kept them as a way of dealing a blow of a different kind.

The two women looked anxiously at each other. "Who did it?" was the question that their eyes asked.

CHAPTER XX

TWO MEN IN A TENEMENT

For days the robbery of Stuart Ward was talked of with keen interest in New York, although it is a city that is apt to forget even important happenings after the lapse of twenty-four hours. But this was a crime so remarkable and so full of mystery, and so huge an amount had been lost, that the public eagerly read the accounts of it and of what the police were doing.

It was found that the man who had assaulted and robbed the millionaire must have entered the building from the roof through the unlocked scuttle. He had entered the hallway of some apartment-house in the block, and thence had made his way over the flat-roofed tops of the buildings.

The police of every city in the country were notified and asked to be on the lookout, and the banks were warned not to negotiate or receive any of the bonds and securities.

The loss meant ruin to Ward. Not only did

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the amount represent something more than his fortune; for, as usual, gossip had somewhat exaggerated his wealth, and, in addition, he had recently lost many thousands of dollars; but the robbery, at that critical time, meant even more than the face value of the papers. It checked him, thwarted his plans, discredited him; for there were some astute bankers who suspected that the alleged theft was a cleverly schemed invention, and that the keen speculator had himself arranged the machinery for its representation.

A general impression sifted through the community that there was much more behind the case than had been allowed to come before the public, and among the acquaintance of Ward—those who had heard some inkling of the case of Mrs. Shotterly—it was believed that the assault upon him was an outcome of that incident. Ward himself told the police that he believed that Shotterly was the man who had attacked him; but the editor could not be found, though detectives searched in every quarter of the city. It was believed by the authorities that he had left New York after the commission of the crime.

Ward also told the police that he had some suspicion of Mayor Malrose, but that this was only slight and was based upon the fact that

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Melrose thought he had a grievance against him, and the further fact that the mayor was to some extent familiar with his rooms. But the police, on investigating the suggestion, came to the conclusion that it was utterly untenable.

Among the newspaper men it was generally believed that Shotterly was the man; but in none of the papers was such a suggestion made, though in all there were strong hints that the assault had been committed by some one who had a deep personal grudge against Ward, and that something very like a scandal lay at the bottom of the occurrence.

Among some there was deep regret expressed for what was deemed Shotterly's imprudence in taking the securities. "It was all right to hurt Ward, and he ought to have hurt him worse, but it was foolish to take the papers." But the very men who said this could not avoid a chuckle over Ward's discomfiture.

Severn was one of the few who did not think that Shotterly was the assailant. "He is too high-spirited a man to attack from behind even the one who has wronged him," he said. "Shotterly would never do that." And in this opinion both Knightson and Hartford heartily concurred. To them, as to Severn, it was incredible that Shotterly could attack a man from behind. "He might attack him—he might even

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kill him—but Ward would know who it was that was dealing the blow.”

Knightson was in charge of the general story, but to one branch of it Severn assigned Hartford. “I want you to find Shotterly,” he said. “Consider that your assignment till further notice. You may take your own hours to it—night or morning—but find Shotterly. And, of course, I do not need to say that anything you may unearth which may be of value to the general story you will at once let Mr. Knightson or myself know.”

With the utmost care Hartford investigated every possible source of information. The janitor and hall-boy at the house where Shotterly had lived were closely examined; the tenants who lived in the same building were seen on the chance that to one of them Shotterly might have dropped some hint; the storage-warehouse people were interrogated in the hope that, after all, Shotterly might have left some address in confidence, and Hartford used all his skill, and successfully, to make the superintendent consider it a case in which it would be only justice to Shotterly to give up information. But, unfortunately, the superintendent really possessed none, and so Hartford had to take up the search elsewhere. Under his assignment he was by no means tied to New York city, but he saw no

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reason to believe that Shotterly had gone away, and in this he differed from the police. He had several long talks with the chief of detectives; and he received in confidence, in exchange for several suggestions, some information as to the lines on which the police themselves were working.

It was astonishing how many clues and possibilities Hartford discovered, and it was with keen pertinacity that he ran them down and investigated them; but still he could not find Shotterly. Often he wandered at random through the streets, and often he chose out-of-the-way sections of the city; but whether working at random or following some definite idea that had been developed, the result was the same.

One night, nearly two weeks after the assault and robbery, he saw from the window of a Third Avenue car, near Thirty-fourth Street, a figure that struck him with a vague suggestion of resemblance to some one that he knew. He looked at it again—the man was disappearing among the crowd that thronged the sidewalk. For a moment he was in the full glare of an electric-lighted shop-window, and then he merged into semiobscurity. The figure was stooping, the walk was a shambling, the whole appearance of the man was one of shabby unkemptness. It was with a touch of curiosity that

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Hartford looked at the disappearing figure, so strangely reminding him of some one, but he could not lay hold of the elusive recollection. Of course it was no one that he really knew—and then there flashed into his mind the remembrance of a talk he once had with Shotterly about the ease with which a man may avoid recognition. This came to him with seeming inconsequence; and in another instant he was dashing toward the door. The car at that moment came to a standstill, and a woman with three children and an immense basket blocked the aisle in front of him. This delayed him a little, and when he finally leaped from the platform and hurried to where he had seen the shambling figure it had disappeared and he could nowhere gain sight of it. On the near-by corner stood a policeman, and to him Hartford described the man's appearance, but the officer shook his head. No, he had not noticed him. For hours, then, Hartford wandered about in that vicinity, but no trace of the shambling figure could he find.

And while Hartford was so eagerly searching for him, the man shambled away, and at Twenty-sixth Street he turned toward the East River, and after proceeding for a little in that direction entered the hallway of an old tenement-house. He stumbled up the dark stairway

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and, on an upper landing, almost ran into a woman, who, herself weeping, was holding a sobbing child in her arms.

"I beg your pardon," said the shambling man. He passed the woman, and then, in a dazed way, stopped and turned and listened to the double wail. He stepped unsteadily back. "Pardon me, but can I be of service to you?"

The words seemed grotesque and incongruous coming from such a disreputable-looking figure, but the woman was not of a kind to notice this.

"I'm hungry," she said.

The man felt in his pocket and drew out some loose change. He put it into her hand. "Take it," he said. "It's all I have. I am sorry it isn't more."

The woman mumbled astonished thanks. "It is good of you!" she cried. "My Jacob, I shall be glad!" The man's eyes were growing accustomed to the dark hallway, and he could see that the woman's face was pinched and lined from trouble.

There came a wail from the room beside which they were standing. "Can't I do something else?" he asked. "I—I'm afraid I'm not quite clear at understanding things to-night, but I want to help you."

She burst into a fit of weeping, and her voice

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choked miserably. "So poor we have been! And so hungry!"

"Come, come," he said gently, "you must control yourself."

"You are a good man, a good man!" she sobbed.

"No, madam. I—I am drunk, I assure you. I—I think that I have not been sober for many days. And this money—well, it is what is left of a little I raised on a coat this afternoon—and I got this ragged thing—" In the darkness he tried to look down at it, and then he shrugged his shoulders indifferently. "And your child inside there is crying—let me hold this one for you, madam. I live on the floor above—the room at the rear—and I shall take good care of the child, I assure you."

Gasping with amazement, the woman relinquished the child, scarce realizing what she did, but instinctively feeling that this was a man whom she could trust. His eyes were blood-shot and his hands were trembling, but these were things she did not notice, or at least did not deem of any moment. And with the hungry bundle in his arms he went up to his room—a little room, bare and cheerless, on the topmost floor.

As he entered, a man slipped out from the room adjoining and went in after him, growling

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a gruff greeting. "Well, neighbor, and so you're back, eh? What have you got that child for?"

"To take care of it for its mother," was the reply. And then the self-constituted nurse seemed to be struck by something absurd in his own possession of the child, and he laughed, a queer hoarse laugh, whereupon the child, that had been quieted by the very amazement of it all, set up a piercing cry. The man tried to soothe it, and handled it so deftly and with such ready ease that it had stopped its crying and was purring contentedly in his arms when its mother, who had run up-stairs in alarm on hearing its wail, put her head anxiously into the room.

She took the child and her eyes rested once more on the man's face. "It is a good man that you are," she said.

But he airily waved a denial. "No, no. I beg of you not to be so mistaken. I am anything but a promising example for struggling youth. I am drunk—drunk—drunk."

The woman looked at him, puzzled, and the other man in the room croaked a hoarse laugh.

"You help me; it is good that you are," she replied.

"No, no—a little thing, madam. I merely held your child in my arms." He sank down

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upon a rickety chair. "Just held it in my arms—I didn't think I'd ever hold anything in my arms again." He stretched them out with a weary gesture. "Never, never, anything in my arms again!"

The woman crept silently away, and the other man in the room said: "What's the matter—getting sick?"

"Yes—no—I don't know—I hope I am," was the sullen reply.

"Pretty hard lines for both of us, eh?"

A scowl was the only answer.

The other man raised himself to his feet and tiptoed to his companion's side. "I say—would you like a chance to be rich, eh?"

"Rob—steal? What do you mean? None of that for me, though."

"I don't mean that; but I'm rich—rich." The words dropped slowly, as if the man were counting gold.

"Have you been drinking, too? Bad habit—very bad—unless you care for life as little as I do." And then his voice quavered in an effort to troll out:

"For he's a jolly good fellow,
Which nobody can deny."

"I wonder when it was we sang that last——"

But the other man impatiently interrupted

TWO MEN IN A TENEMENT

him. He whispered hoarsely in his ear. "It's money—money! It's wealth, I tell you! Don't you want wealth?"

But the first man refused to pay serious attention. "Drink! It's all drink! Some see snakes and some see other things. In your case it's money. In my own—I—I think it's—a woman—a woman who, I once thought, loved me." And he added, with elaborate gravity: "I think, if it were all the same, and I had the choice, I'd prefer to see snakes. It wouldn't come so hard."

"Stop, stop! I mean this in earnest—in earnest, man! Can't you understand? I'd been thinking it over before you came, and now I see more than ever that you're just the man to work the thing for both of us, for we'll divide."

"Now, you look here. If you've been doing anything criminal you'd better not tell me. I'm hard up and I'm in a bad way, but I'm not a thief nor the accomplice of a thief, even when I'm drunk."

The man felt a sudden suspicion. "Are you a detective?" he cried, and he raised his arm and made a threatening step forward.

"Come, come, none of that." The voice was contemptuously commanding, and the man recoiled. "Of course I'm not a detective. I only

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warn you not to take me into your confidence if you've done anything."

The other glared suspiciously for a few moments and then his face smoothed. "I'll tell you after all. I'll trust you and tell you what I did. And I had the right to do it, for the man had injured me terribly and I had the right to revenge. And I took it."

"Did you kill him?" demanded the first man, brightening with interest.

"No, but it was a good revenge, though."

"I'm going to take some revenge myself when I get sober. It wouldn't taste right when I'm drunk. But when I get sober—" He paused and stared out of the window. Bellevue Hospital was down below there, not far away, and he saw the little building that is the public morgue; and the East River was spread out beautifully before his eyes.

"If you're a believer in revenge, you'll agree with me in what I did. I've got wealth, man! Wealth! But I don't know what to do with it. They'd put me in jail. And now that I've bothered him and scared him he can have it all back except the part that's mine. But I had the right to take it. He owed me forty thousand dollars, and I'll give him everything back if he'll let me keep my own—just my own. Isn't that fair?"

The other looked at him commiseratingly

TWO MEN IN A TENEMENT

and shook his head. "Drink, drink! See the evils of too much drink! Here's a man that might have made a success in some walks of life, just wrecked by strong liquors and crazy as—as—well, almost as crazy as I'm likely to be myself before long."

"Stop, stop, man! Aren't you sober enough to see that I'm in earnest? Don't you realize how poor both of us are? Don't you know that we can't tell where our breakfast's coming from? And here is this fortune in our hands. See!" He took out a thick bundle of papers and began to lay them down on the floor in front of where his companion sat, and he handled the papers with a sort of loving awe. And as he laid them down the first man showed an intense surprise and then grew soberly watchful.

"See, see! Look at them. Just look at them! Thousands and thousands and thousands! Nine hundred thousand dollars in all, man! I saw in the newspaper that they're worth every dollar of that. Isn't it enough to make us both crazy! But it's true, and it's real! And I want you to go to him and tell him he can have it all—all—if he'll pay fifty thousand dollars. That's forty thousand for me—that's what he owes me—and ten thousand for yourself. Riches for both of us! Riches! Riches!" In his effort to keep his voice from

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rising, and in the tremendous excitement into which the handling of the fortune had thrown him, he was almost hysterical.

“And now, I want you to go to him and tell him this. I want you to go to Stuart Ward——”

But his words were interrupted by a peal of grisly laughter. “Ho, ho, ho, ho! You want me to go to Stuart Ward for that! Me! Ho, ho, ho!” And the man flung his arms wildly above his head and then paced back and forth through the little room.

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CHAPTER XXI

A MESSAGE FOR MRS. SHOTTERLY

THE next morning, unshaven, haggard, hollow-eyed, but sober, Shotterly left his room and started down the stairway. He had lain and tossed restlessly throughout the night, dozing uneasily now and again and then waking with a start.

Before going down he knocked at the door of the room that Zenas Miffin had occupied, but there was no response. Miffin, in fact, frightened by having his confidence in regard to the stolen securities received in such excitable fashion, had hurriedly gathered together his handful of belongings and fled from the building to seek a hiding-place elsewhere.

Shotterly felt weak, and he held tight to the banister to steady himself. On the landing below his room he stopped for a moment, and a look of pitying concern came to his face as he heard the crying of children. The door stood half open and he glanced within. It was a scene of poverty, and yet there had been a brief time

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of happiness, for the flavor of meat broth was in the air and on the table stood a freshly emptied dish. The dish had been filled by the little money he had given the night before. "Good morning," he said, and the mother welcomed him with a smile of gratitude.

"Is there anything I can do for you this morning?" he asked. The children looked at him in big-eyed curiosity, and the famished look on their faces told how much they needed more than they had had. In the room adjoining—a little black closet of a room—the husband, Jacob, lay, helpless from a broken ankle.

In answer to Shotterly's inquiry the little woman tried to tell him again that she thanked him, but words failed her, and she could only glance sorrowfully about the room.

"Tut, tut!" said Shotterly soothingly; and then he called the children to him, and his smile drew them even though they wondered. One climbed upon his lap and one snuggled against his knees, and soon they forgot their childish misery as he talked to them and petted them.

The mother watched the little scene, and under the quiet spell of Shotterly's presence she told, in broken sentences, that her husband had after a long period of irregular work, secured a good position as motor-man; that the great strike had come and that he would not conser

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to quit with the other men; and that she, Lena, frightened for his safety, had forced him to leave his car by making a scene on the street in front of it. And when the strike was over Jacob had been refused work by the company, nor could he secure it anywhere else. Their few dollars of savings had gone. Then had come sickness. Finally, Lena had gone out and begged and had been arrested and taken before a judge. He had been merciful, and several dollars had been given to her, and she had carried the money home in ecstasy. But the few dollars soon went and bitterest poverty again descended. A little work now and then by him, a trifle earned now and then by her, and somehow they had existed, but that was all.

Shotterly put the child gently down. "I must go out and earn some money," he said. There had come over him the sense that here, before him, lay a duty that he must not try to evade. Here was suffering in his very path, and it was his duty as a man to relieve it.

He paused at the door and looked down at the little woman, who, with wide-open eyes, had crept after him, wondering. "You must go," he said slowly, "to the Out-door-relief Department, at the foot of Twenty-sixth Street—just down the street here, I mean" (for a moment he had forgotten the grotesque fact that he was

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living in a Twenty-sixth Street tenement). "Go and tell them; they will do something for you." He could not go himself. The one thought paramount in his mind was to hide from all who had known him. Nor could he tell the woman to say that she had been sent by "Mr. Shotterly, of the Diurnal," though he well knew how quickly this would obtain for her what she needed.

"Do you understand where you are to go?" he said.

But Lena shook her head. "I am afraid, for they will arrest me again. No, no!" She was unhappy at refusing to do what he told her, but there was none the less an obstinacy in her manner that he almost smiled to see. It was not from fear for herself, she explained, but if she should be arrested again for asking help (and she did not see the difference between going where Shotterly told her and begging as she had done before), what would become of Jacob and the children while she was locked up?

And so Shotterly went out upon the street to earn money. He tried to chuckle to himself over the situation. "I seem to have adopted a whole family, and I don't know how to handle a plane, or run an elevator, or do anything else, so far as I can judge."

A picture came to him of the Diurnal office.

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of Knightson and Hartford and Severn and all the others—of the warm welcome that would meet him there—"Why, Shotterly, old boy!"—of the hands outstretched in greeting. He brushed the tears from his eyes. "I'm getting weak," he muttered. "This'll never do. Brace up!"

He looked down at his soiled and ragged clothes, he felt of his stubbly beard, and again came that vision of office and friends and well-paid work and comfort. But how hopelessly far away all that seemed! "My honor and my coat are in rags now," he whispered to himself.

He walked slowly along, and wherever he saw laborers at work he stopped and asked for a job. But at place after place he was refused. He learned of how little value is a poor-looking man; he began to wonder how, once down and ragged, a man ever succeeds in getting up again. He grew more and more hopeless, for he was hungry as well as heartsore. At length he paused at a corner where an excavation was being made for a new building. He stood watching the busy workers, and was afraid to ask the foreman for a job, so sharp and cold did the man appear to be.

And at that moment there came up beside him two poorly dressed fellows accompanied by

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a stout, keen-eyed man, whom Shotterly at once recognized as the political leader of that district. The leader spoke to the foreman, and told him that here were two for whom he wished places, and the foreman at once, and with eager readiness, said that he should find work for them. A district leader is a man of immense power within his own kingdom. Not only do the police watch for suggestions as to his wishes, but building inspectors and other city officials are always ready to listen respectfully to him. And the district leader is often—is generally, in fact—a man who uses one branch of his power to secure work for unemployed voters of his bailiwick.

The jobs secured for his two constituents, the leader was turning away, when his eyes fell on Shotterly, and in one swift glance he saw that he had fallen from a far higher place and that he was eager for work. He turned back to the foreman. "Here's another friend of mine, too" (Shotterly started; he thought the district leader had recognized him, but in a moment he saw that it was but a kindly phrase); "I didn't notice that he had got here so soon; just put him on with the others, will you?"

"Sure." The foreman looked at Shotterly doubtfully. "But it's only laboring work."

"Well, that'll be all right for the present,

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won't it?" said the district leader; and he nodded lightly at Shotterly and was off.

When Shotterly went back to the tenement-house that night he had seventy-five cents in his pocket (he had worked for much less than a day). He had refrained from drink. Now and then he had felt a craving, but it had soon passed away. He handed the money to Lena and sank down in a chair. "Just make supper for all of us," he said; and as he sat, dazed and dreaming, waiting for the supper to be cooked, the fact of his own personality seemed a vague and unbelievable fancy.

"I went to your room and I swept and cleaned, and I will your shirts wash; and Jacob, he wants you his razor to take," said Lena, bustling about.

Next morning, with a face clean shaven and with somewhat of a neater and tidier appearance, Shotterly went again to work. In his weak condition he could not have held the place had it not been for his supposed standing as a member of the political family of the district leader.

Late in the forenoon of this day a drenching rain began, and soon Shotterly was soaked and chilled. The rain came down more and more heavily, and the foreman ordered the men to stop work for the day; and Shotterly, cashing

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his time-check, found that he had earned but little. He took the little to Lena again and tried to see the humor of the situation and to laugh at it. But somehow the laughter choked him.

He did not get up at all the next morning. With a shiver he awoke, and then fever and chill alternated in racking him. He lay alone throughout the day, for Lena supposed that he was off at work. He grew worse as the hours passed and at times was almost delirious. And when night came and he did not appear, Lena, with alarmed misgiving, went up to his room and found him sick and helpless. She wrung her hands and bemoaned her stupidity. She would send at once for a doctor——

“No!” Shotterly’s voice was so peremptory that it frightened her. “I have no money to pay for a doctor,” he said less sharply, “and I can not have a public doctor come to see me.” He knew what it would mean. An ambulance would drive up to the door from Bellevue, and the young surgeon would swing from the tail-step and mount the stairs and look at him, perhaps almost perfunctorily. He knew most of the staff; he even pictured to himself just which one it would be. Then the driver and the surgeon would carry him down-stairs and through a knot of craned-neck idlers on the sidewalk; he

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would be driven to Bellevue, and there, among the several reporters (for, night and day, Bellevue Hospital is never without reporters, stationed there to watch for the tragedies that in succession are sucked into that maelstrom of the city's misery), he would be sure to be recognized. It was too great a risk to run. He would get well—if he were to get well at all—by himself. "Do not go for one of the free doctors," he said sternly.

Lena did what she could for him. She made up his cot, she hovered anxiously about, and she brought him a little warm broth, though he could not swallow it. "I shall be all right in the morning," he said, "and now I shall try to sleep."

Twice before midnight she crept again to his door, but he was quiet and she did not disturb him. Toward morning he grew much worse, and when, with the earliest touch of dawn, she again appeared, his caverned eyes glowed with a fever-light and he was tossing restlessly.

Lena was frightened, but he checked her exclamations. "I am not sick," he whispered.

"But you are, you are!" she cried. "It is a doctor you must have!"

He took her wrist in his grasp and firmly held it. "Don't go," he commanded. She sank down, scared and quiet, and then he strove

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to marshal his fevered thoughts sufficiently to give her a message which he knew that he must send.

"If anything should happen to me," he began, and his voice was indistinct and the words were labored and slow, "I want you to do something."

"Yes, oh yes!" she cried. And he told her, very slowly and very carefully, so that she would be sure to understand, the address of an apartment-hotel just off Sixth Avenue.

"Ask there for Mrs. Winston—Mrs. Winston—" Somehow, in some way, Shotterly had traced out the hiding-place of his wife; had learned the name by which she was known there. "Be sure that you get to see her— And then tell her that John is dead. Do you understand?" His burning eyes held her in a compelling eagerness.

"Tell Mrs. Winston—that John is dead," she slowly repeated, terrified and awed.

"And tell her—that—that—" Then he spoke up irritably as the fever clutched at him and his mind wandered. "What was it that Hartford said? Oh, yes, now I remember! Tell her that I loved her—that I loved her—and that nothing—quenches—love."

And having by sheer will-power thus held himself together till his message was given, he

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resisted the fever no longer and talked deliriously of scenes and times of the past, of his home life and of newspaper happenings, while in frightened horror and with her wrist still firmly clasped, Lena crouched beside him.

At length he fell silent, and his eyes grew less wild but his face more bleak and drear, and Lena for a moment thought that he had become rational again.

"It was all a mistake, Zoe," he said softly. "It puzzles me, but I know you wouldn't have done it if you hadn't loved him. It's a hard world. A world of problems, my dear."

His words trailed off, bogglish and wavering, and his forehead grew dank and cold. "Zoe!" he suddenly cried, and there was a sound of fearsome fright in his voice as if he were warning her from some awful peril. "Zoe! Zoe!"

Then he lay back composedly on the cot. "Mr. Hartford, I want this to be the story of the day," he said quietly. And then: "I'm going—home." The words fell drearily, curiously steady. "I won't be back." And with that he sighed, with gentle weariness, and his inert fingers unclasped.

CHAPTER XXII

THE LONELY PASSENGER

LENA went to the apartment-house which Shotterly had described, and she asked for Mrs. Winston; but, poorly dressed and timid as she was, and overawed by the grandeur of the place, she went away when curtly told that "Mrs. Winston is not in." In a few hours she was back, but met with a similar reception. This time she said that she would wait, but at that was turned sharply away. The next morning she again went, but had so much the appearance of a beggar that no attention was given her.

It had been necessary to report the death to the authorities, and a coroner's assistant had come and looked at the body and had found that it was a case of "death due to natural causes." Lena said she thought the man's name was John Winston, but she kept to herself the fact of the existence of a Mrs. Winston. That, she felt, was a secret which she had no right to tell, though she could not guess at the meaning of it. And so the body was taken to the Morgue,

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and on the pine box was tacked a little slip of paper: "John Winston, pneumonia."

Back again to the apartment-house she went, determined now to find Mrs. Winston, for the dying man's insistent mandate hauntingly impelled her. There was now such importunate urgency in her tone that the man at the door grudgingly paid some heed. "She is out, but you may wait. I think she will be here soon," he said. And then, sulkily, "Here comes the lady now." And Mrs. Shotterly paused in a sort of anxious wonder.

"John is dead!" blurted Lena.

Mrs. Shotterly looked at her in uncomprehending fright. "John—dead?" she whispered.

"Yes, John is dead. It was his message for you."

"Take me to him." The words came sharply, impulsively. And she maintained her composure, though her cheeks were suddenly splotched and dashed. She led Lena from the building and got her into a cab. She sat down beside her. "Where shall we go?" she demanded. And Lena said, "To the Morgue"; whereat Mrs. Shotterly gave an almost sobbing cry.

As they drove on she made Lena tell her all she knew, and her heart beat hard and she

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fiercely bit her lip as the story and the full message were given. As they talked, the cab went past the tenement-house. "That's where he lived." And Mrs. Shotterly looked at the building with swift scrutiny, and then uncomprehending wonder swept over her face. John—and there! It was incredible. And then she remembered the destination toward which even then she was bound. And as she drove on and left the building behind, she caught sight of a face she knew—oh, yes! that was Marshall Hartford, the Diurnal reporter, and one of John's friends.

To the Morgue. And Mrs. Shotterly spoke to the keeper with a cold composure that seemed haughtiness. "The body of John Winston, ma'am? No, ma'am; that's gone to Harts Island."

"What do you mean?" The semblance of composure was nearly lost.

"To the Potter's Field, ma'am." Then the man glanced out of the dull-paned window and exclaimed: "But they haven't gone yet, either, for the boat's still at the pier there!"

Mrs. Shotterly almost ran from the building, thrust money into the hand of the waiting cabman, and ran out upon the long covered pier. The gangplank was just being drawn in, but she darted over it with a swiftness that placed her

THE LONELY PASSENGER

on the lower deck of the steamer almost before the astonished men could realize what had happened. Lena, running after her, stood on the pier and watched the steamer slowly swing into mid-stream.

"Where is the captain?" asked Mrs. Shotterly.

The mate deferentially led her to the upper deck, and on the way Mrs. Shotterly regained her calm and decided upon the part that she would play.

"Our guild has been greatly interested in John Winston, who has suddenly died and without any of us knowing it till too late to secure his body and keep it from Potter's Field. We wish, of course, to give it a decent burial." Her manner was cool and had more than a touch of hauteur. "I drove down at once, representing the guild, and arrived only at the moment you were leaving. And now I wish to have the body taken back and properly cared for."

The captain was visibly impressed but at the same time embarrassed. He had never before had quite so beautiful a woman on his boat, although not infrequently he had taken visiting committees to some one or another of the city's penal or charitable institutions.

"I'd like to do what you want, ma'am," he said; "but you see, my orders—" He was a

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strict constructionist as to orders, of which those who knew him were well aware.

"But I don't see why it can be against orders to save the body of a deserving man from pauper burial," said Mrs. Shotterly with a smile. The captain could not suspect that her heart was fiercely wrenched by her own words and by the thought that lay behind them.

"Well, of course I know it's all right; and if you'd only thought to have stopped at the office of the commissioner——"

"But I didn't have a moment!" she cried.

"I know, I know, and I'm sorry, but you see it's my orders; and though I know it's all right this time, there have been things about life insurance and even about possible murder——"

"That will do, sir," she said sharply.

"But I want you to understand," he went on in a slow determination not to be misunderstood. "If I let bodies get away from me without orders, how can I explain it if anything happens? It doesn't make any difference, so far as my orders are concerned or my position, that in this case it is all right." He kept coming back to this phrase, and he regarded Mrs. Shotterly with artless admiration.

"I see," she said coldly. "Then I shall give an order and send for——for——"

"Yes, and of course it'll be brought back

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quick. But even though I know it's all right——”

“Yes, yes,” she said impatiently, moving away from him.

“Let me get you a stool, ma'am,” he said.

“Let me put it in here for you.”

“Thank you, I'll sit up at the front,” she responded.

“But—but the bodies are just under there.”

“I'll sit up at the front,” she repeated with cold decision; and he drew away from her, angered. “Queer taste,” he muttered.

Mrs. Shotterly drew a little stool close to the front rail, and, leaning forward, looked down at the piled-up coffins on the lower deck. Her eyes were drawn to a card on one near the top of the pile, which was built up close before her, and on the white tag she read the words, “John Winston.” She shuddered and eyed the box with fearful fascination. And as the boat puffed its slow way along, the face of the woman there on that upper deck was fixed in an expression of awful horror.

The golden sunlight sifted down through a golden mist—a thin mist, lying flat and high—and, below, the air stood strangely clear and still. And over the waters of the broad East River, shimmering gloriously in that golden sunshine, moved the clumsy boat—that boat

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which contains within itself, on its drearily recurrent trips, a greater variety of human misery than does any other boat, any other conveyance, in the world.

The convict deck-hands went about their work, but Mrs. Shotterly did not even notice them. She did not see the rock-reefed Blackwells, girdled by water of rippling splendor. She did not heed when one landing after another was made; when a sad consignment of the crippled and the sick were put ashore; when sullen penitentiary prisoners were landed; when a long line of paupers filed off for the almshouse; when another hospital received its sick and halt and blind; when workhouse prisoners were sent ashore.

Beyond Blackwells there were trees and greenery, and there was a charming attractiveness about the other islands, gem-set in the water, under that golden light; and a party of insane were put ashore amid the beauty; and then the babies, foundlings or orphans, were carried, big-eyed, across the gangplank.

And the shores and the water grew more and more charming, more and more beautiful; and no freight, no passengers, were left on the steamer but what was in that heaped-up pile on the forward deck; and ever the eyes of Zoe were on one plain box.

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Harts Island was reached, and the convict deck-hands began shufflingly to carry the coffins ashore. "Lift that one gently," said Mrs. Shotterly; and the men glanced with furtive wonder at this pale lady, who seemed so proud and cold, and they heeded what she said. On shore she stood patiently beside the box. The captain of the steamer would have aided her, or offered to aid, but she had repelled him before, and now in her bearing he saw a forbidding aloofness that made him leave her to herself.

"Hurry up there, Meggerby!" And Meggerby approached where Mrs. Shotterly was standing and would have seized one end of the box. "Stop!" said she. His cunning eyes twinkled with surprise. "This man's body is to be sent for to-morrow. I—we don't want it buried in the—the—" Her composure had almost gone; that long ride with the dead had almost broken her calm, and Meggerby, greedy and shrewd, saw that here was something far out of the common.

"I risk my job if I don't do just what I'm told to," he began, holding his frowsy cap in his hand and speaking with obsequious hesitation. She handed him ten dollars. "Don't bury the body. Keep it carefully away from the others, and keep the mark plainly on it." Her anxiety and fright were beginning to show in

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her voice. She could not, to this creature, make pretense of explanation. He took the money with a crafty smirk. "I'll keep it right up here, at this end," he said.

She stood, drearily waiting, and all about her the pauper graves stretched away in long rows, and all about the island gleamed the water.

Meggerby felt a craving to desecrate that box. He longed to lower the pride which he was sure that it represented. His evil mind scented an evil secret, and he guessed that this fine woman had some special interest in the silent occupant of that cheap square-sided case. The grisly fellow longed to throw pauper earth over it; he longed to reduce that silent something inside of it to his own base level. His fingers itched as they clutched the spade. "I'll do it when she's gone," he said to himself.

The steamer-whistle blew. "All aboard!" called the mate. The crew shuffled back. The woman who had so coldly watched them, silently followed. The captain saw that she was worn and anxious, and his irritation disappeared. "Come into this little cabin and sit down," he said in gruff kindness; but she replied wearily: "I thank you, but I shall be better out here in the open air. I feel a little faint." She drew a stool to the edge of the rail of the after-deck,

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and with dry and burning eyes looked back at the paupers' island as it lay in shimmering glory in the glorious golden light. And when a bend hid it from view she laid her face, buried in her hands, down upon the rail. And gradually the twilight wrapped her round.

Marshall Hartford, whom Mrs. Shotterly had chanced to see as she passed the tenement-house where John had lived, was on a vehemently earnest quest. Since the time when he had caught sight of Shotterly, poor and ragged, on the sidewalk, he had been in a fever of energy in his attempts to find him. He had barely slept. When he had thrown himself down for a few hours he had lain awake studying out new plans, new courses of action. He had not reported to Severn. He hoped that he should not need to let any one know how far down John had sunk. He would find him, treat him with tenderest friendship, get him on his feet again, and no one should know.

With intense application he trailed and searched. He strove in innumerable ways to open up the right clew. Time and again, by dint of myriad inquiries, always shrewd and direct, he found some new line of search open, only in the end to find it prove valueless. He inquired of policemen, of clerks in shops, of newsboys.

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of the keepers of fruit-stands, of tenement dwellers, of numberless people.

A man of the height and features of Shotterly, but dressed in ragged clothes and walking with a spiritless shamle—it was well that he knew how to describe his present appearance. And finally, for he brought to the search an intensity of purpose and an alert intelligence, he found the right course and little by little began to piece it out.

A man answering the description of Shotterly had been seen at points along Third Avenue. Several times he had been noticed at the corner of Twenty-sixth Street. And Hartford turned down this street, sure that at length he was on the proper track. It was slow work. At some houses Hartford would not rest till he had made inquiries of every tenant. At others he would ask of one or two. Now and then he would pass a house altogether. In the search he was illustrating a phase of the operation of the news instinct—a something which lies partly in trained intelligence, and which to some extent seems to be a sense apart.

At length he became convinced that he had found the very house, and for a moment he held back in dread of what he should discover. "It was into that hallway, sir, that the man you want used to go." He shivered. It seemed as

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if he had no right to thrust himself into Shotterly's unhappiness, to throw aside the cloak of secrecy with which it had been hidden. He went in and sought out the janitor. The man listened attentively to Hartford's description. Then he slowly nodded his head. "Yes, top floor, back—but he's dead."

"Dead!"

The janitor guided Hartford to the rooms of Jacob and Lena. "They'll tell you," he said.

And Jacob told him the little that he knew, and every word made Hartford more sure of the dead man's identity. He went up and looked at the bare, mean room. Then he went back to Jacob. "Wait for my Lena," said the man.

And soon, weeping and agitated, Lena came; and she told of John's death, of how in his fever he had called for Zoe, of how he had talked of newspapers and had seemed to talk with men. "And Hartford was the name more than any."

But of Mrs. Winston she did not say a word. She felt, in a confused sort of way, that she must not give the dying man's secret even to this anxious inquirer. And then she told that the body had just gone by the steamer to the Potter's Field.

Hartford thanked her and hurried from the

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building and to the office of the Charities Department. There, on behalf of the Diurnal, he asked for an order for the body of John Winston, which, he explained, the Diurnal wished to bury properly. Then he found and engaged a naphtha launch, and the little craft went swiftly toward Harts Island.

Hartford reached there after the steamer had started back on its return trip, and when Meggerby, his gloating eyes fixed on the plain box, was about to bury it in one of the excavations. He would do this even though he should have to take it out in the morning. And what a satisfaction it would be! "I may even find who he was, too, and it'll be something to tell Mrs. Danny." But at that moment Hartford appeared with his order from the department, and the cheap box was gently carried to the launch and there laid down.

On the return, the little craft passed the clumsy steamer lumbering slowly on, and Hartford, glancing at it, saw a well-gowned woman with her face bent down upon the rail and hidden in her hands. And when Mrs. Shotterly reached the landing at Twenty-sixth Street and went to the office of the department, she was told that Marshall Hartford had been given an order for the body of John Winston, and that he had stated that it would be taken to an under-

THE LONELY PASSENGER

taker's rooms. And she found that Hartford, with the launch, had already come in.

Hartford went to the office of the Diurnal, and to Severn he told the whole story. "We'll sit up with him to-night, Hartford, you and I. You were his closest friend, latterly, I think, and I was his closest enemy—at least, that's what he thought I was."

They went to the little back room where the body lay, and they looked long at the calm, dead face, and then they began their vigil. And in a little while the door softly opened and a woman, her face hidden by a thick veil, glided in. She did not speak. She barely inclined her head in greeting, and then sat silent, ghost-like. Hartford knew who it was, though he could not see the face. He recognized that it was Mrs. Shatterly: her form, her movements, the poise of her head, a certain distinctive grace, were unmistakable. He caught the eye of Severn, and the two men rose and slipped quietly from the room.

CHAPTER XXIII

A FIRST-PAGE EXCLUSIVE FROM HARTFORD

HARTFORD went to his rooms hoping to find Knightson, but he was not there. But the boy announced, with ivoried glee, that the "ladies had come back, sah!" For a moment Hartford thought of going up-stairs, but put away the idea. He was too hurt in spirit, too distressed in mind, too physically weary to feel that he had the right to visit; it would only tire them.

He started down the stairs, meaning to go again to Lena and Jacob and there learn more of the last hours of Shotterly; but on the stairway he met Elinor and Mrs. Westenhouse—Elinor radiant with happiness and with a glow upon her cheeks and shyness in her eyes.

"Won't your newspaper work let you turn back and see two lone lorn women for a little while?" the girl said gaily.

And Hartford turned back with them with a sense of happiness, of restfulness, that dulled for the time the grief that had been racking him. "But I shall have to call you the Knight

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of the Rueful Countenance if you look so grave!" cried Elinor; and his face only grew the more serious at this, and he said: "Yes, I know I look grave, and it was wrong of me to come in at all, feeling this way, but I have been having an unhappy time."

"Is it anything that we can help you with?" Both were warmly sympathetic.

And Hartford told of Shotterly, of his miserable life at the tenement-house, of his death. "We are keeping it all quiet; scarcely any one will know of it," he said. He told the story simply, clearly, and tears stood in the eyes of his hearers. He told, too, of Mrs. Shotterly watching beside the dead body of her husband.

And so deeply was Hartford immersed in the memory of all that had that day occurred that he could not perceive that in Elinor's eyes there shone a new affection, a new admiration. He did not know that in his stern gravity, in his love for his lost friend, in the deeper manliness that had of late been growing upon him, he was far more attractive to a girl like Elinor than when he had tried his best to please her. Nor, most important of all, could he know that, while Elinor was at Westchester, his image had more and more become dominant, that more and more she had longed for him, that at length

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she had told Paul Waters that she must take back her tentative promise of consideration.

Hartford said good night and went back to the tenement-house where Shatterly had died, but now there was no light in the motor-man's rooms, and he would not waken him to know still more of what his friend had said, what messages, if any, he had left.

He went out through the dark hall, and at the foot of the stairway saw that a figure suddenly crouched into the darkness out of sight. He barely looked at it. Newspaper men, who go into all sorts of strange places at night-time, are seldom definitely on their guard. They come to rely on a certain assurance of bearing, and they know that one who thus carries himself is seldom molested. Men who harmlessly shrink off into dark corners are all too familiar to those who go into the strange places of a great city at night.

The light from a street-lamp shone on Hartford's face, and at that the skulking shadow moved out quickly toward him with a sudden cry, and then shrank confusedly back as the young man turned upon it.

"Marshall—" The voice was shaken and full of a great amaze.

It was Zenas Miffin. Hartford instantly recognized him, and he was both astonished and

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pained when he noticed his uncle's wretched appearance. This was the second example that he had seen that day of the fall of a man from respectability, from prosperity, to calamitous poverty. It frightened him to think of the ease of descent.

"Where are you living, uncle?" Hartford felt a repugnance to using the term of relationship.

"Nowhere. I don't even know where I shall sleep to-night."

"Come with me, then." He almost succeeded in keeping the repugnance out of his voice, and walked with Miffin to a respectable lodging-house of which he knew. There, first, he got him something to eat, and then went with him to a room and sat down beside him. "This will do for to-night, won't it? And to-morrow we can more fully talk things over."

"I've lost all my money," said Miffin.

"Yes, I know. I once heard you saying so," returned Hartford, remembering the speech in the street.

The old man looked at him fixedly; then he said: "You don't seem to want to throw me over, after all."

Hartford was puzzled. "Of course not; why should I?"

"Well, we didn't get on very well together,

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as I remember, and now I've lost everything——”

The young man interrupted him impatiently, not noticing a crafty slyness in the half-shut eyes. “You are my uncle, and I don't know that you ever did me any harm. It was more what you didn't do than what you did, as I look back on it; but what's the use of raking over an old fire! Just let me help you as a matter of course. I shall be glad to do it.” The words were warm but the tone betrayed annoyance. Hartford, in fact, tired as he was, was easily irritated.

“No great love lost!” chuckled the old man. “And you're my only living relative, too! I really think you're my only living kin, for my sister Ann died two months ago. Aren't you worried about my having lost the inheritance for you?”

Hartford frowned and his voice was sharp. “I shall come back in the morning. I don't know why you are trying to annoy me.”

He rose, but the old man touched him with his hand. “Sit down,” he said. His manner was suddenly alert, keen, watchful. “Don't mind my teasing you—just listen to me. I went to that house to-night to see a man I had met. I wanted him to help me in a great matter. I had tried him before, and was going to try him

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again. I couldn't wake him, and then I got in and the room was empty—and now you will help me instead."

Hartford looked at him with fixed attention. "What was the man's name, and what do you know about him?"

"I don't know anything about him. Listen!" He looked cautiously around and his voice sank to a whisper. "I'm rich—rich!"

"Rich! What do you mean?"

"H'sh! I know I don't look much like it; but I've got—nine—hundred—thousand—dollars!"

He took out the securities that represented such a fortune and laid them slowly down one by one, fondly and caressingly, as if loth to let them out of his grasp. They were soiled and creased from handling. "I'm putting it all in your hands, Marshall," said the old man with a touch of wistfulness. "I can't do anything with it. It's too much for me." Then he told how, maddened by the loss of his own fortune, he had schemed for revenge on Ward and how fully he had obtained it. "He ought to give me forty thousand, and ought to give you ten thousand for yourself for getting it back to him. He'll certainly give me something—don't you think so? A thousand, or five hundred, or—or something?" His voice sank pitifully.

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His fingers worked feebly as if he would fain take the fortune back again, and his nephew looked with deep concern at him and at the securities.

"I'm going to Ward at once," said Hartford. "I'll take this to him instantly."

"And the forty thousand?" demanded Miffin in a shrill whisper.

"He owes it to you. I don't doubt that in the least; but that is a minor point. We don't know at what moment it may be too late. These papers must not remain with us for a moment longer than I can help. Ward is a scoundrel; but if the detectives find you with this it will be worse than the loss of forty thousand dollars."

He found Ward in his rooms in the bachelor apartment-house. The millionaire was moody and his face was haggard. "Of course you know that only something important could bring me here," said Hartford.

"Of course," said Ward. "Won't you sit down?"

"I prefer to stand, Mr. Ward." His voice was cold and dry. "I have come in regard to the robbery."

"But I have no further news for the papers," said Ward.

"I want none. I have come to give you news." Ward visibly brightened. "And

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first," continued Hartford, "I wish to assure you that you were wrong in suspecting for a moment that it was my friend John Shotterly."

"I have for some time past thought I was mistaken in that," said Ward courteously, "and I am glad that you can positively assure me in regard to it. You would not come here to say this unless you had something more than mere belief."

"I have much more than mere belief." Hartford's tone was still dry and cold. "We newspaper men sometimes learn strange things."

Ward could not repress the anxious brightening of the eyes. "Strange things," he murmured.

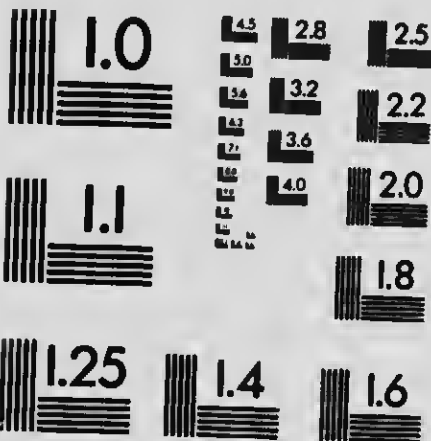
"Now, I wish to put a supposition before you. If the securities were returned to you, would you be willing to take them without asking questions, without being told more than I should willingly tell, and would you guarantee from punishment the man who took them?"

"I have for some days suspected a man," replied Ward; "one whom I need not name but on whose track I have set the detectives. Why I did not seriously think of him sooner is only an example of blindness. At any moment that man may be arrested. But I will gladly call off the police and ask no questions." And he



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added: "Of course, too, I shall thank you, Mr. Hartford, for the very great service——"

"No, I am doing no service for you, sir. The information came into my hands, and it is in my sense of what I ought to do that I serve you. Do not misunderstand me."

"Pardon me, I do not misunderstand you. I should not have expressed myself as I did. And none the less I thank you."

Hartford took out the package of securities and laid it on the table. "Please count them," he said. "I hope everything is there; certainly the greater part is. If anything is missing I shall have it searched for."

Ward could not restrain the trembling of his hands as he counted. "They are all here," he said, and he drew a deep breath of relief. "What you have done is of great value to me. I am willing to tell you that had I not secured these papers by not later than to-morrow I should be a ruined man."

"Then I can only say that I deeply regret the necessity of your getting these securities back. I am sorry that you are not a ruined man." Hartford spoke with bitter heat, and Ward looked at him in astonishment.

"You seem—pardon me, Mr. Hartford—but you seem so sensible, that this little supposed matter of a woman's taste——"

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"John Shotterly is dead," said Hartford in a low voice.

"Oh!" Ward looked at him blankly. "Oh!" he repeated softly. Then he made a slight gesture as of shaking something from his shoulders.

"Then shall we return to these papers? For I know you do not care to have me speak of your friend. Now, Mr. Hartford, I beg of you to understand that I am making no hints and that I am not asking you to tell me what you may not wish to tell. But I want to say that I practically owe a certain man—shall I name him?—forty thousand dollars. I had determined, just before the robbery, to pay that sum to him. I wish to pay it now. May I guess that your newspaper knowledge has told you something of all this, and that you even know how to get the money to him?"

"I know whom you mean," said Hartford. "I know he believes you took his money from him. I know that the sum was forty thousand dollars."

"Shall I make the check in your name or in his?"

"Whichever you prefer," was the curt reply.

Ward wrote a check in the name of Marshall Hartford for forty thousand dollars. "You understand," he said, "that this is not in pay-

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ment of anything except my own debt to the nameless man we have in mind."

Hartford took the check. "Now," he said, "I wish to ask for something——"

"Certainly, certainly! I am glad of the opportunity. Let me make it ten thousand—will that be satisfactory?"

"Do you really think," was the contemptuous reply, "that I could take any of your money?"

Ward stared at him a moment. "Pardon me; of course I know you could not, and I apologize."

"What I was going to ask is this. I am a newspaper man and therefore I look out for the interests of my paper. I merely ask you to say nothing to the police or to any one, till after our morning paper is out, in regard to the return of these securities, and after that to say nothing further than what you will read in the Diurnal in the morning."

"I most willingly promise it. I am very sorry that under the circumstances I can do nothing more for you."

In spite of weariness, in spite of the tremendous number of hours that he had worked and of the little that he had slept, in spite of his anxiety of mind and his unhappiness—for of such things a newspaper man has no right to

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think when work is before him—Hartford went to the office of the Diurnal and was surprised to find that Severn, too, was there. The managing editor was leaning over the night city editor's desk and Hartford saw that he was restless, disturbed, a bundle of nerves.

"Mr. Severn, I wish to report on a story—an exclusive."

"Yes."

"I have just placed in the hands of the millionaire, Stuart Ward, the nine hundred thousand dollars that was stolen from him."

Severn prided himself upon always receiving the most important news with coolness. "All right, Mr. Hartford, go ahead and write it," he said quietly, and then turned back to the night city editor.

But in a few moments he walked over to Hartford's desk. "Nothing to do with Shotterly, of course?" he said anxiously.

"No, indeed!" And thereupon Hartford gave an outline of the circumstances. "But most of it is in confidence. The man trusted me. And it has nothing to do with Shotterly."

"First-page story and take all the space you need," said Severn. And Hartford, forgetting his weariness, forgetting his sorrow, bent his mind on the story, and wrote steadily and well, turning off sheet after sheet, which were caught

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up by a waiting messenger and borne, one by one, to the copy-desk and thence to the composing-room. And before going home he went back to the lodging-house and told Zenas Mifflin that he had won his forty thousand dollars.

Next morning Hartford lay in bed, tired and drowsy but proud, for the boy had brought him the Diurnal, and there, under great head-lines on the front page, was a long story, recapitulating the circumstances of the robbery and telling how an unknown man had mysteriously returned the stolen securities.

He drowsed off to sleep again, for he was utterly worn out; and as he did so he heard a girl's voice singing, and it mingled happily with his dreams, for the song was one that Elinor used to sing up there in the Westchester valley.

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CHAPTER XXIV

AMONG THE WESTCHESTER HILLS

MONTHS passed and springtime came and a beautiful May-day dawned; and under a blue, blue sky Elinor Wharton and Marshall Hartford walked together in Central Park. They thrived their way through tangled paths set close about with lush greenery, and then came out upon one of the broad open spaces of the park; and it seemed a land of enchantment, for multitudinous bright-clad children, in detached groups, were dancing around wreathed and festooned may-poles and around garlanded queens. It was a riot of color, of white gowns beribboned in every hue, of variegated streamers soft-toned by the green of the grass.

Elinor gave a cry of delighted astonishment. "Oh, how beautiful! I did not know there could be anything like this! It is real, real fairy-land!"

"Yes, and isn't it odd to have the quaint old custom survive right here in busy New York?"

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They watched for a while and then went on to where there were larger spaces, more children, more may-poles and streamers, more garlanded queens. And through the various entrances to the park little bands of excited children were still thronging in, each band led by its queen, her face serious with importance. There was a charming witchery in it all.

"There are many thousands of children here," said Hartford, "and a great proportion come from the poorest sections of the city."

"Yes, and I notice that there are many of the parents, too, looking on."

They both glanced at a party of poorly dressed women who at that moment came up near them to watch one of the larger groups. Hartford turned to Elinor with a smile. "Yes, and one of them you ought to remember—see; the woman who has just stepped out from the others."

"The face does remind me of something; but no, I can't place it."

"Don't you remember the woman who threw herself in front of the car?"

"Yes, yes! Well, of course it's she! And didn't you tell me that——"

"Yes, it was she who cared for poor Shotterly in his last hour," responded Hartford.

AMONG THE WESTCHESTER HILLS

"Severn saw to it that Jacob got a good place, and they have been very prosperous since."

They looked again at the thronging children frolicking and dancing. "How many, many little queens, and how proud each one of them must feel!" said Elinor.

"And I am proud, too, dear—proud that you are to be my own queen; proud that you are to be my Queen of the May."

After a while they walked to one of the driveways where it swept around a lake, and they sat down on a bench at a pretty spot half-hidden, whence they could look out upon the passing carriages or at the breadth of shimmering water. They talked of the times that were past, and Elinor toyed with a great bunch of violets that Marshall had given her, and she said that violets always made her think of a certain spot in the Westchester country; and then he spoke of a day when they two had sat on the grass together among the flowers, where, as here, birds and greenery were all about. He looked fondly at her as the memory of those days came back.

Of many things they talked, with long and tranquil silences between, and then they spoke of the future.

"I am to become assistant city editor tomorrow, Elinor. Knightson is still to be city"

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editor, as he has been for several months, and he is a fine man to work with. The experience will be very valuable to me."

"And after a while you will be city editor!" she cried.

He laughed. "There's often a great difference between the city editor and the assistant on a paper like the *Diurnal*," he said; "but if I stay at it long enough really to learn something, I may begin to think about it."

"And you don't want to leave the work yet?"

"No. It has a very real fascination for me. The experience that I am gaining will be of great value, too. Of course, when I am a little older I must decide whether I shall keep at it or try to follow out my early ambitions. But do you know, Elinor, I more and more think that much of the best writing is the simple, straightforward presentation of facts, and that a man may be producing literature when he is hurriedly writing a newspaper editorial or setting down the account of an interview or a tragedy."

They watched the seemingly endless line of carriages, and from time to time Hartford recognized the faces of well-known people—people whose names appeared in print. "And how discontented most of the women of fashion

AMONG THE WESTCHESTER HILLS

are!" he said. "Don't you notice how sour or morose or unhappy most of them appear!"

"Indeed, yes. And how strange it seems! One would naturally think of these people, with plenty of money and time, as being nothing but happy and gay," responded Elinor. "I have been wondering why it is. Is it that they really feel a great deal superior to ordinary folk but think it well-bred to hide the superior feeling under a pretense of being weary of it all?"

"It never occurred to me in that light. Let's take a special look at the next carriage and see if we can find an explanation."

The next carriage was coming rapidly toward them, and in it sat a woman and a man. It was a handsome equipage, giving unmistakable signs of taste and wealth. The woman had rich full lips and was of striking beauty, and in her great, deep eyes Hartford and Elinor could not but see a proud unhappiness. The two on the bench watched in silence as the carriage swept by. "Till now I have never seen Mrs. Ward dead Shatterly," said Hartford gravely.

The end of May came, and Elinor and Hartford looked out from the side of a green, green valley over a broad lake glimmering between Westchester hills. At the Wharton homestead, tucked there on that sloping hillside, the two

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were married, and Knightson and Jenkins and Brierly were among the wedding guests.

And after the ceremony was over Marshall and Elinor went out again upon the porch, and looked across toward where Hartford had formerly lived, and at the spot where he had disappeared after waving her good-by.

"How happy we are!" That was the thought and the word of each. And with hands clasped they stood there in silence, busied with thoughts of the happy past, of the happier present, and of what they were confident was to be a still more happy future.

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